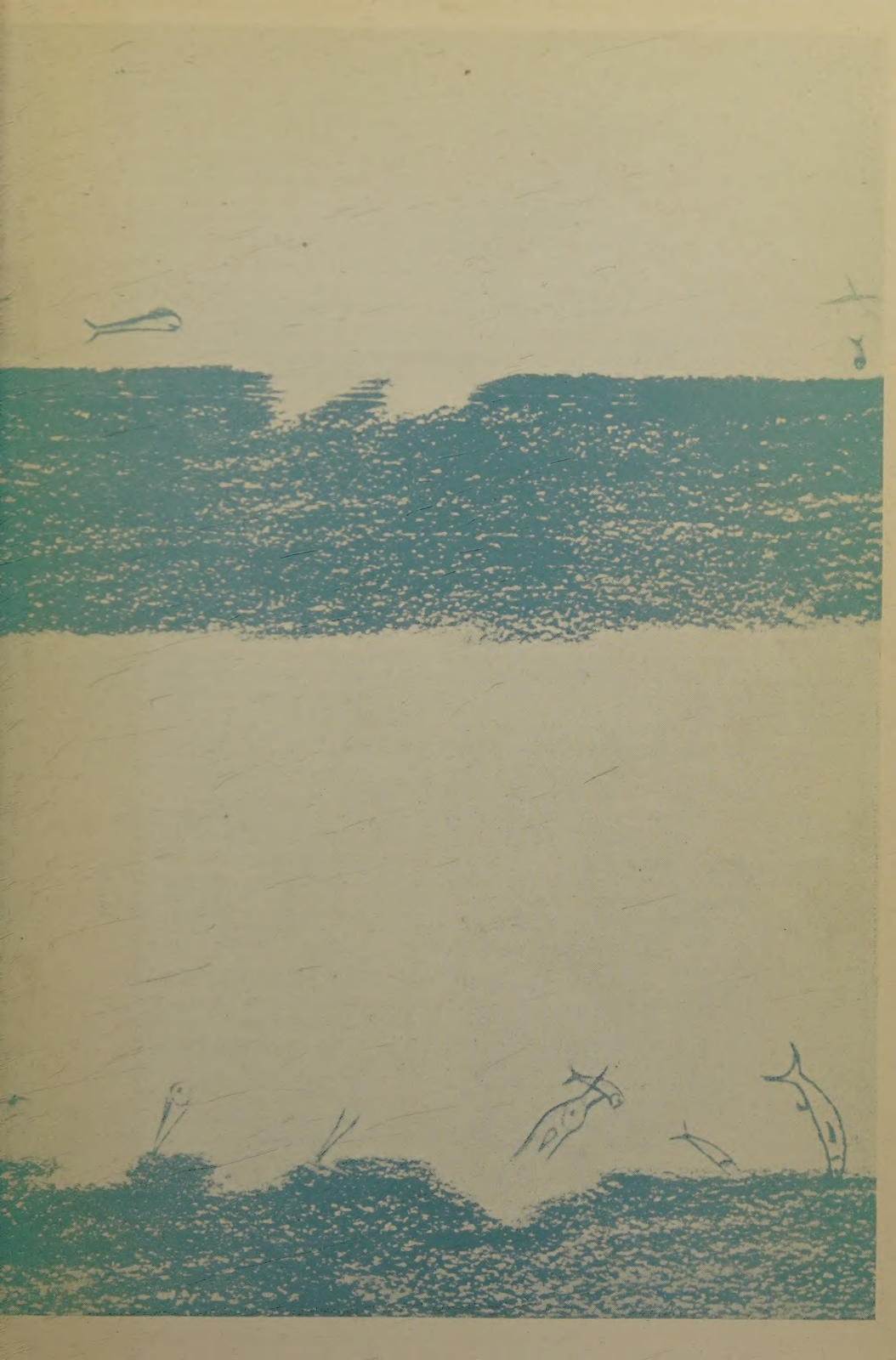
# GAME FISH OF THE PACIFIC

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIAN AND MEXICAN

GEORGE C. THOMAS, JR.
AND
GEORGE C. THOMAS, III

LOS ANGELES MUSEUM
EXPOSITION PARK



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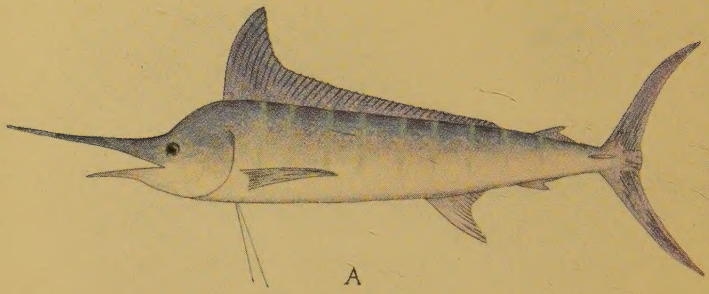

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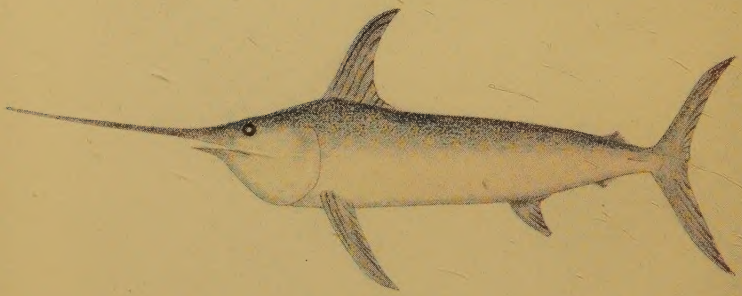

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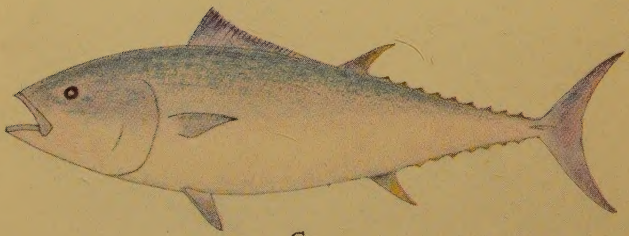

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THE BIG GAME FISH OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

A. Marlin Swordfish—Tetrapturus mitsukurii
B. Broadbill Swordfish—Xiphias gladius
C. Bluefin Tuna—Thunnus thynnus

# GAME FISH OF THE PACIFIC

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIAN AND MEXICAN

BY

GEORGE C. THOMAS, JR.

AND

GEORGE C. THOMAS, III

*FRONTISPIECE IN COLOR AND*
*89 ILLUSTRATIONS*

PHILADELPHIA & LONDON
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GEORGE C. THOMAS, III.

PRINTED IN THE
UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA

FIRST EDITION

TO PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE ANGLERS OF
THE BIG GAME FISH OF AMERICA'S PACIFIC
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

LOS ANGELES MUSEUM
EXPOSITION PARK

# *FOREWORD*

UNTIL lately our Pacific big game fishing on the American Coast has been restricted to Southern California, and the general opinion has prevailed that this sport is on the wane—that the old days of many tuna and swordfish are over. Commercial fishing rightly has been blamed for decrease of tuna and broadbill, as well as held accountable for the lack of yellowtail and other smaller varieties.

However, two dominant factors recently have obtained which change the outlook and guarantee the continuance of sport. First and most important to the California Coast is that a new migration of marlin swordfish and another of dolphin appeared in Southern California waters during 1929. The marlin came in greater numbers than ever before. For many days schools of these fish passed southward through the channel between Catalina and the mainland. Certain small bodies left the general southeasterly trend and loitered to feed on anchovies and other bait, but most of them did not tarry long. It was not a few scattered individuals arriving and resting in our sheltered island lees; it was beyond doubt a great,

general migration of thousands of fish journeying southward.

Often these marlin swam on the surface in groups of a half dozen to twenty fish, always headed and continuing steadily east of south. They could be followed for miles as their sickle tails cut the swells. A few large units kept to one location for some days, but even these drifted rapidly south and east.

If a traveling squadron produced a strike on light tackle, the hooked fish attempted to follow its fellows; but if separated from them, nevertheless, always endeavored to maintain the same course. One fish killed on three-six tackle carried angler and boat over twenty miles in the migratory lane.

The greatest former marlin year in the history of the Tuna Club was 1923, when one hundred and seventy-three specimens were taken. In 1929 well over two hundred marlin were caught. Dolphin have never appeared in as great numbers as during last season. Few have been seen the past ten years, and it is nearly twenty years since they were here in quantity.

Looking into the records of fishing we find periods when tuna disappeared for several years and then

returned, and somewhat similar conditions with marlin and broadbill, but these two great visitations of 1929 prove beyond doubt that in the future we will have migrations and lack of migrations, as in the past. Therefore, while we must curtail the commercial netting and live bait depredation to insure our future supplies of indigenous fish, we may rest assured that nature's provision of recurring absence and appearance promises some protection to the traveling kinds and resulting good years for anglers with such varieties.

The second factor affecting the outlook for big game fishing is our proximity to the Mexican coast, which is an angler's paradise. In these waters the sport is beyond compare. Fish of diverse species and types await the angler, and in size, as well as numbers, exceed our best records. An increasing ownership of boats practical for Mexican waters insures widening popularity and proves that the new field will be visited by fishermen from all over the world.

It is the object of this book to give the story of Southern California and Mexican big game fishing, illustrating its lure by photographs, sketches and true stories of fish taken or observed. In addition, it

is hoped that a description of tackle and methods may be of value. As a conclusion, and of the greatest moment to our future ocean wealth, as well as to all anglers, this volume will prove the necessity of conservation and the fact that unless commercial fishing is restricted, our heritage of a great natural resource is endangered.

The reproductions of the drawings of fish, dispersed through the volume, are made from the original life drawings by George C. Thomas, III., and are included for the purpose of aiding those who fish these waters in identifying their catches. They represent the fish most usually taken in Mexican waters.

Beverly Hills,
California
June, 1930

George C. Thomas, Jr.
George C. Thomas, III.

A ROUND HAUL WITH NET OUT

AN ALLISON TUNA TAKEN BY MR. KEITH SPALDING

## *APPRECIATION*

It would have been impracticable to produce this book without the co-operation and interest of the angling fraternity in Southern California, while data furnished by the Tuna Club has been most valuable.

Our most sincere thanks are due to Mr. Keith Spalding for use of his diary, which supplies important information gleaned from his numerous trips south of the American line. Many other men who have fished below California have aided, and the total information so freely offered has enabled us to supplement our own researches.

The pictures donated by Mack Sennett and Keith Spalding were given in a spirit of sportsmanship to help us depict to other anglers the wonders of Pacific fishing. The taking of these photographs meant not only great expense, but scientific application of expert knowledge, combined with remarkable patience.

The authors are under a debt they cannot repay for the use of this remarkable material, and the angling world should appreciate these contributions to fishing literature.

Long association with Captain George C. Farnsworth has enabled the writers to acquire most important facts from him, while his skill and resource as a navigator and boatman have made their catches possible.

The illustrations taken on the "Radio" trip are by D. Scott Chisholm. His co-operation in the securing of these pictures has been of great value.

The untiring assistance and courtesy of Mr. H. R. Hill,

of the Los Angeles Museum, have been very essential in identification of many species of fish taken in Mexican waters.

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*GAME FISH OF THE PACIFIC*

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIAN
AND MEXICAN

EXPOSITION PARK

CHAPTER ONE

## *SUMMARY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FISHING*

THIRTY odd years ago Avalon was a little village rambling with small and disconnected frame buildings along the waterfront of its bay. The mountains shut it in at the back; the Pacific was its outlook, its connection with civilization, the thing which made it possible, for the life of the ocean supplied it with its livelihood—its very being.

C. F. Holder states that he first visited Catalina in 1886; "that he saw men catching fishes from the beach which tipped the scales from twenty-five to forty pounds, caught with short handlines and crude weights."

Bait was secured by gathering small fish forced on land by feeding varieties which churned the water into foam and were in turn taken by the lure of the little fish they had chased ashore.

It was in 1898 that Holder killed a tuna of one hundred and eighty-three pounds, heading the Tuna Club tables as the largest tuna of the first season recorded.

Dr. Holder founded the Tuna Club and was its first president. This famed organization was established for the purpose of placing fishing on a sportsmanlike basis; for specifying tackle and rules which would insure fair and uniform equipment, to the end that fish would be fought on the same regulated basis by all anglers, and waste and unethical methods eliminated.

In the early days of Avalon everything was primitive. Here Holder used one of the earliest, if not the first rod to bend to the rush of a large fighting fish. Old Mexican Joe did not believe a yellowtail could be taken on a rod. Tuna had been considered beyond the reach of rod and reel, and no swordfish had been overpowered on any tackle. Reels were poor things with leather drags, good leaders were rare, and lines were of inferior quality when compared with those of today. In fact, all tackle was below 1930 requirements.

The same conditions which presented village accommodations and rough fare provided either rowboats or slow launches, some of questionable seaworthiness. Everything was inadequate when considered with present-day standards. No one dreamed

THE TUNA CLUB

THE LATE W. C. BOSCHEN WITH HIS RECORD BROADBILL
This fish stood high for over 10 years. It weighed 463 lbs.

of the time when a well-organized island company would transport thousands of persons a day on splendid up-to-date steamers; when million-dollar pleasure buildings would cater to throngs carried to the waterfront by special electric trains from the mainland cities.

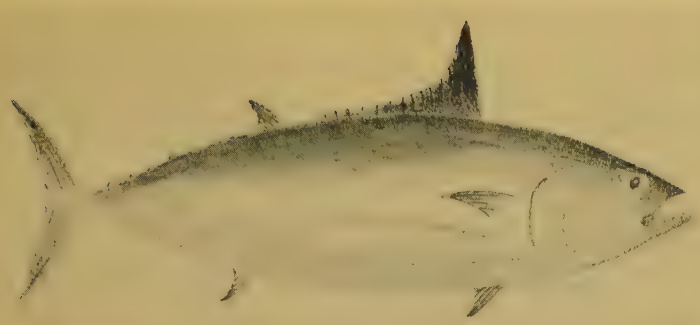
Simplicity was one of the attractions—"the rush of the madding crowd" was never present. Avalon slumbered in its matchless, if not absolutely perfect, marine climate, living in its own little world and sufficient unto itself. Then came the steady growth of the southland cities; the purchase of Catalina Island by the Wrigley interests, the improvement in living and transportation facilities, and the accompanying influx of anglers provided with newer and better fishing equipment; then the great real estate boom of the early 1920's, increasing wealth and population of the southwest, all of which was felt by Avalon and the anglers.

The Tuna Club grew famous. Membership which was won by the taking of a "button" fish, was considered a great honor among the followers of Izaak Walton. Men came from all over the world for the sport of tuna and swordfishing. Some anglers built

boats of special design for killing big game. The Tuna Club tournaments provided splendid tests, and the competition was keen and active.

Meanwhile, the fishing itself felt the effects of progress. Fish indigenous to the waters became scarcer, not so much on account of increased ocean traffic or sport catches, as because of commercial live-bait boats. These craft, equipped with tanks holding thousands of live bait in water kept fresh with pumps, found a rich harvest and reaped it with profit to themselves, but with a decimation of many varieties of smaller game kinds. Where once yellowtail were caught in numbers from the shore, it became difficult to find a few specimens after days of search in fast, modern launches, and unless live bait in quantity was used to attract these fish, it was difficult to secure any yellowtail. White sea-bass diminished in proportion. The same situation pertained to various other varieties. Even the rock-bass crop decreased in size and numbers. The barracuda, mackerel and bonita being migratory, have not been eliminated so rapidly.

Albacore once came in vast multitudes. Possibly the depredations visited upon their schools have had



SKIPJACK OR OCEANIC BONITO—EUTHYNNUS PELAMIS

*Description:* Small fish of the mackerel family. It is the true oceanic bonito, but called skipjack by anglers, probably because of like size and appearance. Back dark blue running into pink pearl toward belly. Three distinct dark stripes on ventral side extend from the pectoral fin to tail, but no marking on back. Dorsal fin unusually high and rather short, breaking down abruptly from front. Eight finlets on top and seven below. Eye very large, yellow with black center.

*Distribution:* Found from the Channel Islands southward to Cape San Lucas and elsewhere in the Pacific.

*Habits:* Travels in schools and takes bait quite readily. Often when feeding it will jump clear of the surface.

*Capture:* Should only be taken on light tackle as it seldom runs over seven or eight pounds. A game little fighter but has mediocre food value.

BONITO; ALSO CALLED SKIPJACK—SARDA CHILENSIS

*Description:* Small fish of the mackerel family. About twelve pounds in weight. Light blue color on dorsal side. Darker blue bars or stripes running horizontally along back. Low dorsal fin, extending almost to second dorsal. Eight finlets on back and six ventral side.

*Distribution:* Found from Catalina to Turtle Bay and probably much further south. Frequent the waters of Channel Islands practically throughout the year.

*Habits:* Like all species of mackerel family, it travels in schools, feeding on small fry and shrimps, and surfacing according to weather conditions and its fancy.

*Capture:* Almost any artificial lure or live bait will attract this fish, but light tackle is necessary to bring out its fighting qualities. Has medium value as food.

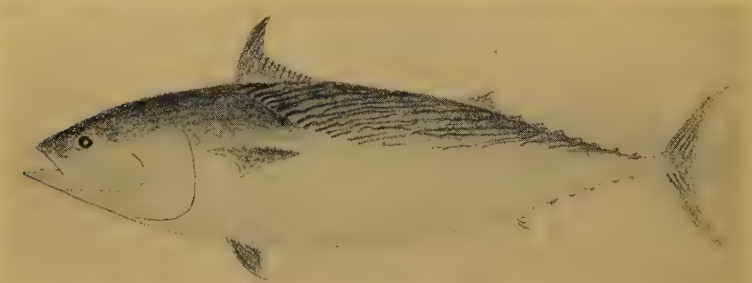
SKIPJACK—SARDA VELOX

*Description:* This fish, a small species of mackerel family, apparently is closely related both to bonito and skipjack. While more chunky than the former, it has the horizontal stripes on its back, and the long low dorsal fin. Color bluish on dorsal side, gradually fading and blending into a beautiful pinkish pearl on belly. As in the bonito, eye is rather small. It approaches seven or eight pounds in weight.

*Distribution:* This mackerel was found only in vicinity of Santa Maria Bay off coast of Mexico. There are no available records of its being taken elsewhere.

*Habits:* Typically mackerel.

*Capture:* This fish may be taken on practically any small bait at any trolling speed, and the lightest of light tackle should be used. It is a very game fighter for its size, but its food value is mediocre.



MEXICAN SKIPJACK, FRIGATE MACKEREL—AUXIS THAZARD

*Description:* A small mackerel approaching ten pounds in weight, with typically mackerel bars running the length of back behind pectoral fin, sloping upward toward dorsal side. Color on back is dark iridescent bluish green, which fades to pink pearl on ventral side. An unusually high, short and quickly sloping dorsal fin, and small pectoral fin are noticeable. There are seven finlets on dorsal side and five below.

*Distribution:* This fish was taken in great numbers at Cape Corrientes, and probably is indigenous to surrounding territory.

*Habits:* Habits are typically mackerel.

*Capture:* Mackerel tackle is best for its capture, but light rods are necessary to bring out its fighting ability. Food value of the Mexican skipjack is negligible.

some effect in turning their lane of travel away from our waters, but even the great quantities killed have not yet vitally affected them, and in due course fresh appearance of albacore should occur. If they are harassed as before, they will eventually be destroyed. There must be a limit to wholesale slaughter if any fish are to live or return.

Meantime, while live-bait commercialism almost annihilated the indigenous small fish, tuna were netted in unbelievable quantity by round haul net boats, and no doubt such inroads have decreased their numbers and frightened those which do reach us, so that they become increasingly difficult to take with rod and reel. Nevertheless, the migratory habits of the tuna will safeguard them for a time, although if wanton and unrestricted netting is continued, they, too, soon will disappear and be a thing of the past in Southern California waters.

Broadbill swordfish are being harpooned from boats with "pulpits" (standing places on their bowsprits) and the supply for anglers diminished. Those which escape are more difficult to work than heretofore. The chasing of the broadbill by harpoon boats renders them extremely shy, and during 1929 but

two were secured by anglers, and very few seen, as compared to average years. However, broadbill are migratory. While they nearly always appear in some quantity, they vary slightly in numbers, and herein lies their small chance of survival unless harpoon fishing is abolished. Lately harpoon boats are operating in Mexican waters and the broadbill seems doomed.

Fortunately, the marlin has poor food value. His season of stay is short. He is more difficult to harpoon and does not go in sufficient numbers, as a rule, to make netting profitable. Also he is so large that special nets are required to hold him. Yet in 1929, boats harpooned some marlin, and this is a menace to his future here.

The situation may be summarized briefly as follows: There is a steady and alarming decrease in yellowtail, white sea-bass, rock-bass; an unimportant decrease in barracuda; an appreciable decrease in mackerel, bonita, skipjack, etc. Dolphin appear infrequently, and there has been no organized commercial effort against them. Albacore remain less affected because of their long absences, but they are

slaughtered in thousands when they do come to our coast, and this will eventually eliminate them.

Tuna fishing seriously is menaced; broadbill cannot survive unless harpooning is stopped. Marlin prove that they exist in great quantity and that their migrations vary considerably, which, coupled with the fact that commerce has not yet attacked them to any extent with serious results, would tend to show that so far they are free from fear of decimation.

Conditions existing near Catalina are approximately the same as those pertaining from Santa Barbara to the Mexican line, the field of our Pacific big game territory.

The Tuna Club has changed its rules to meet varying conditions, while the interest shown in angling has caused the formation of the Southern California Tuna Club of Long Beach, and the Light Tackle Club.

Our California fishing commission is supposed to be doing everything possible properly to control commercial interests, while certain portions of Catalina waters have been proclaimed by law a fish

refuge, and net boats are not permitted to operate in this district. This refuge area gradually decreases.

To insure a continuance of our Pacific fish, both for food and sport purposes, the entire Southern California coast should be kept reasonably free of live-bait and net boats. It is unreasonable and wasteful to allow one industry to destroy the fish of California's southern coast, thereby hurting other interests. It means not only the loss of a food supply, but also the removal of a natural resource that has helped make the Golden State famous and prosperous. The handwriting is on the wall for all to see. America's experience on the Atlantic coast, and with her other fish and game, present the irrefutable illustrations. Tuna, swordfish and small ocean fish are not being reproduced by hatcheries. The present commercialism will result in the loss of the Pacific game and food fish unless it is controlled.

The fact that American capital is now sending large craft to Mexican waters not only affects the California situation, but makes for the destruction of Mexican varieties.

When one considers that the men doing the actual fishing often are foreigners—either Japanese or

CROSS BRED MACKEREL

There is no record in the Los Angeles Museum of this fish, and at the writing it is unnamed. It is allied to the Atlantic Bonito (Gymnosarda allerate).

*Description:* Small fish running up to ten or twelve pounds in weight, evidently related closely to the yellowfin tuna and skipjack. Light bluish color on back with about five distinct narrow horizontal stripes running from pectoral fin to tail. Belly has pink hue and is iridescent. Has four pronounced spots or splotches of black on ventral side back of gills. Behind these are three stripes running to tail. The dorsal fish is both high and long, but slopes quickly from front.

*Distribution:* Found in the lower part of Gulf of California and down the coast of Mexico. Little is known of its range or migration limits.

*Habits:* Habits of this fish are typically mackerel.

*Capture:* It will strike on any small lure, and is very game, but has little food value.

SIERRA MACKEREL—SCOMBEROMORUS SIERRA

*Description:* This beautiful little mackerel is covered with iridescent golden spots which give it an almost trout-like appearance. Body is long and slender, with typically mackerel fins and tail. Mouth large. Color on back is blue which fades to pinkish pearl on ventral side. Attains a weight approaching twelve pounds.

*Distribution:* Found in waters ranging from Turtle Bay to the tropics.

*Habits:* Schools and surfaces like all members of mackerel family.

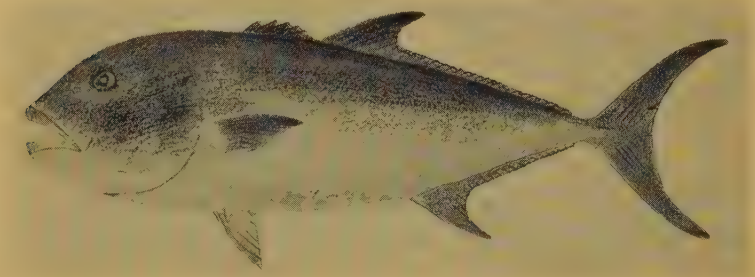
*Capture:* Much sport may be had from this little warrior on light tackle. Most game and makes short fast runs away from boat as it tries to elude capture. Small spoons and jigs are used to tempt it. One of the finest food fishes of the world.

YELLOWTAIL—SERIOLA DORSALIS

*Description:* One of the best known of all west coast game fishes. Varies in weight from fifteen pounds or less to eighty, but average fish taken is somewhere below thirty-pound mark. Back is greenish bronze hue, which changes into flat white along belly. Fins and tail, as name would indicate, are of lemon yellow. Soft dorsal fin is high and extends almost to tail, as does anal fin. First dorsal and pectorals small. On this fish tail is like that of the mackerel, but slightly more flexible.

*Distribution:* The yellowtail migrates along coast of Mexico and Southern California, and probably is indigenous to Mexican shores, at least as far south as Banderas Bay. Very plentiful on the east side of Gulf of California, especially in vicinity of Tiburon Island.

*Habits and Capture:* The habits and capture of the yellowtail are fully described elsewhere in this volume.



TUREL (TUREL DE CASTILLA)—SERIOLA COLBURNI

*Description:* This fish, a member of yellowtail family, greatly resembles the latter both in coloring and general appearance, although head and body are much heavier. Proportion of length to depth is about three and one-third to one. Back is dull bronze hue, fading into yellow and white toward ventral side. Six sharp spines in the first dorsal. Mouth and head very large, and the tail typically mackerel. These fish seem to average about forty pounds.

*Distribution:* Practically all of the turel landed on trip were taken in the vicinity of Cape San Lucas and Banderas Bay. Indigenous to the tropics.

*Habits:* Much like yellowtail, running in schools, scattered groups, and individuals.

*Capture:* The large specimens taken by the "Radio" were fought on a nine-ounce tip with eighteen-thread line, and put up typically yellowtail fights. Struck on large Wilson spoon. Smaller fish bit readily on smaller spoons and other artificial lures.

Europeans—many of whom cannot speak English, the need for protection is intensified. However, the canning interests behind the industry are the ones chiefly responsible.

There are two sides to every question, but the writers believe that if a commission is appointed to look into the situation, conservation will be recommended.

CHAPTER TWO

# *TACKLE AND STANDARD*

THE Tuna Club specifications and rules are published herewith in full so that the text following clearly will be understood:

## Tackle Specifications and Rules

The following tackle specifications and rules are the result of over thirty years' experience. Strict adherence to both the spirit and letter of these rules is vitally necessary in order that the Tuna Club may maintain the high standards set by its founders and retain the enviable reputation it now enjoys. In fairness to all, involuntary infractions of these rules can be no more condoned than can willful violations. Members should be sure that they understand the rules and that their tackle complies with the specifications. The underlying spirit of angling should be that it is a sport in which the skill of the angler is pitted against the instinct and strength of the fish and that the latter is entitled to an even chance for his life.

### TACKLE SPECIFICATIONS

1. *Heavy Tackle*—Rod to be of wood or cane, with usual mountings, and shall consist of butt and tip and shall be not shorter than 6 feet 9 inches over all. Tip shall be not less than 5 feet in length and shall weigh not more than 16 ounces. Line shall not exceed standard 24-thread

linen line and shall have a maximum breaking strain when dry of not to exceed 66 lbs.

2. *Light Tackle*—Rod to be of wood or cane, with usual mountings, and shall consist of butt and tip and shall be not shorter than 6 feet over all. Butt shall not exceed 14 inches in length. Tip shall be not less than 5 feet in length and shall weigh not more than 6 ounces. Line shall not exceed standard 9-thread linen line and shall have a maximum breaking strain, when dry, of not to exceed 26 lbs.

3. *Three-six Tackle*—Rod to be of wood or cane, with usual mountings, and shall consist of butt and tip (butt may be of metal), and shall be not shorter than 6 feet over all. Butt to be 12 inches in length. Weight of entire rod shall not exceed 6 ounces. Line shall not exceed standard 6-thread linen line and shall have a maximum breaking strain, when dry, of not to exceed 16 lbs.

NOTES

The word Tackle shall be defined as consisting of rod, reel, line, leader, hooks and harness.

Leaders shall not exceed 15 feet in length. Double line, not to exceed 15 feet in length, may be attached to the leader.

By length of rod over all is meant with tip fully seated in butt. By length of tip is meant from the shoulder of ferrule to outer end of tip.

RULES

1. Every angler must bring his fish to gaff unaided and by use of regulation tackle only.

2. The following acts or omissions will disqualify a

catch: (1) a broken rod; (2) hand-lining a fish; (3) any person, other than the angler, touching any part of the tackle, excepting kite-line and leader, while the angler is fighting a fish; (4) hand-lining the double line or use of a boatman's handline snapped on or in any way attached to the double line or leader; (5) failure to have rod weighed and measured and line tested before competing; (6) failure to comply with tackle specifications; (7) shooting a fish; (8) throwing gaff at fish before leader is within reach of boatman; (9) use of harpoon, lance or lilly iron; (10) any one other than the angler and one gaffer, assisting in gaffing or killing a fish; (11) use of gaff exceeding 8 feet over all in length; (12) use of more than 2 hooks attached to leader at any one time or use of cluster hooks.

3. All fish entered for competition for Club buttons or prizes must be officially weighed in and recorded. Tackle must be exhibited when fish is weighed in. Any protest relative to weight of fish or manner of weighing must be made before fish is removed from scales.

Any protest relative to tackle or manner of killing fish must be filed, in writing, at the office of the Tuna Club within 24 hours after fish is weighed in.

4. Every member competing for Club buttons or prizes must have his line tested and rod weighed, measured and stamped by the Club and a record thereof will be kept. The Club expressly reserves the right to require an additional line test and to call for an examination of tackle whenever such action may be deemed advisable.

5. Competition for Club prizes or buttons is limited to waters between a line drawn due West from Point

Concepcion and a line drawn due South from the international boundary line, until you clear the Coronados Islands; thence due West.

6. The award of buttons will be governed by the tackle upon which the fish is caught.

### TUNA CLUB BUTTONS

*Blue Button*—Awarded to angler taking a Tuna of 100 lbs., or over, under Tuna Club rules and tackle specifications for Heavy Tackle, and who is regularly elected.

* *Red Button*—Awarded to angler taking a Tuna of 60 lbs., or over, under Tuna Club rules and tackle specifications for Light Tackle and who is regularly elected.

*Gold Button*—Awarded to angler taking a Marlin Swordfish of 200 lbs., or over, under Tuna Club rules and tackle specifications for Heavy Tackle, and who is regularly elected.

*Green Button*—Awarded to angler taking a Marlin Swordfish of 100 lbs. or over, under Tuna Club rules and tackle specifications for Light Tackle, and who is regularly elected.

*White Button*—Awarded to angler taking a Broadbill Swordfish of 200 lbs., or over, under Tuna Club rules and tackle specifications for Heavy Tackle and who is regularly elected.

*Purple Button*—Awarded to angler taking a Broadbill Swordfish of any weight under Tuna Club rules and tackle specifications for Light Tackle and who is regularly elected.

* Red Button was first issued in 1906, for a 50 lb. fish; weight raised to 60 lbs in 1922.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

*Active Members*—Gentlemen anglers who have taken a Tuna weighing 100 lbs. or over, or either a Marlin Swordfish, or a Broadbill Swordfish weighing 200 lbs. or over, under Tuna Club rules and tackle specifications for Heavy Tackle, or those who have taken a Tuna weighing 60 lbs. or over, or a Marlin Swordfish weighing 100 lbs. or over, or a Broadbill Swordfish of any weight, under Tuna Club rules and tackle specifications for Light Tackle, shall be eligible for Active membership.

There has been in the past, and is at present, much well-taken and practical criticism of tackle specifications and rules as prescribed by the Tuna Club, so it seems wise that a discussion and explanation of existing and proposed standards be appended.

Heavy tackle is too large for some fish and not large enough for others. Tuna of less than one hundred pounds are taken too easily on the regulation "heavy" outfit. Marlin up to two hundred pounds are likewise at a disadvantage against such equipment.

Light tackle is too small for the required tuna of sixty pounds or over, and many marlin are too large for regulation "light" used by the average angler.

Rules should favor general fishing, not cater to a few specializing experts.

It has been suggested that a tip of nine ounces, coupled with a line of fifteen to eighteen strand, be used on tuna from sixty to one hundred pounds, and on marlin up to one hundred and seventy-five, or possibly two hundred pounds. Such an outfit should be built to comply with other heavy tackle specifications and should merit a Tuna Club button, the type, whether an existing button or a new one, to be decided by the club. However, the writers are in favor of additional buttons, because such new classes give further incentive to competition and records.

This new rod-and-line specification need not do away with "button" classes as designated at present. It would provide a fairer test by giving average anglers for medium sized tuna and marlin a more difficult task than the very easy capture on "heavy," and a more reasonable chance than the too arduous fight on light tackle.

Heavy tackle is not large enough for our heaviest tuna. For years fish have broken 24-thread lines on their initial rushes, while it is open to argument

whether broadbill of large size and very big marlin should not be worked with a stronger line and heavier tip. The present tuna record of 251 pounds, taken in 1899, is recorded as having been accomplished on regulation "heavy," and since that achievement it has been the ambition of our best anglers to kill a larger fish—but this has never been done. In fact, only once has another tuna of over 200 pounds been boated, when in 1901 a lady angler is reported to have killed a fish of 216 pounds. When such men as Boschen, Adams, Grey, Thomas, 3rd, and others fail, and all of them lose big fish by the breaking of 24-thread line, it seems reasonable to presume that a stronger line is advisable, although the adding of a class for fish of over two hundred pounds with another button for competition, with a 36 or 39-thread line, for instance, and possibly a 20-ounce tip, does not preclude anyone from trying to exceed the existing record on 24-thread. Again, such an addition of outfit and prize button enlarges the field of competition. Some men who kill tuna of over two hundred pounds in Mexican waters advise the heavier line. A few claim 24-thread is large enough, but the broad thing to do is open up the

competition for the rank and file and secure some tuna over the two hundred pound mark.

Of course, when one uses very heavy tackle he may get a strike from a small fish, or if he tries lighter tackle than regulation "heavy" he may hook a very large fish. In the first instance, the angler may lose a button or a record, and in the second illustration he may lose the fish that he otherwise would have taken.

However, except in blind trolling, the size of game may be judged with reasonable accuracy. Certainly this is not difficult with surfacing fish, whether tuna, broadbill or marlin. As a matter of percentage, the smaller than heavy tackle has the advantage, and the larger than heavy need only be tried when the extreme size of the quarry is ascertained.

As to broadbill, the heavier than regulation tackle is open to argument. The largest game fish ever taken at Catalina or elsewhere, on Tuna Club "heavy" is to date the five hundred and seventy-three pound broadbill of George C. Thomas, 3rd. This record has been exceeded in size by Zane Grey and R. C. Grey with the same variety of swordfish weighing five hundred and eighty-two and five hundred and

eighty-eight pounds, respectively, killed in Southern California waters near Avalon, but the anglers used a 39-thread and rods of about one-third larger size than the Tuna Club 16-ounce tip. Zane Grey has killed more broadbill than any other man, and has taken greater numbers of large fish among Nova Scotia tuna, Australian swordfish and Maco sharks. His opinion that our biggest swordfish need a heavier than regulation outfit should have great weight.

It would seem that a compromise with an additional button class is the wise course. Why not give a new club button for all fish of over five hundred pounds, taken on 36 or 39-thread and a heavier tip? Here, again, the majority of anglers are provided a better chance for competition, and those who desire to break the existing world's record of five hundred and seventy-three pounds on 24-thread are not barred.

The above solutions as given for the intermediate class between light and heavy, and the extra specifications for larger tackle than regulation "heavy" are logical, have many advocates, and should be adopted.

When one considers the reducing of the lightest tackle heretofore used for club buttons, the verdict is more difficult to reach and the divergence of opinion harder to reconcile. Several broadbill have been killed on light tackle by James W. Jump, a noted light tackle angler, and a new club button, the purple, put up for competition. It is a debatable question whether the taking of this very heavy fish on extremely light tackle is best for general club effort.

Occasionally, the broadbill easily tangles in aeroplane wire leader, and while a very powerful fish, he is often not extremely boat-shy, and may sometimes be gaffed before he is exhausted, or be approached because of his fearlessness of the boat, so that a gaff secures the fish, rather than the rod. If no tangle occurs, this is a feat of skill and one for which the angler should receive just praise and a special prize, but it is not adaptable to the general membership.

Lately, one of the writers of this book killed a marlin swordfish of one hundred and fifty-five pounds on regulation three-six tackle, which is the first marlin so taken in Pacific waters. This is the

world's record for the largest fish caught on the smallest regulation outfit.

The marlin is a faster fish than the broadbill. He seldom tangles, even on aeroplane leaders, and is nearly always extremely boat-shy; he may be tamed on three-six tackle to a point where the leader is brought to the boatman for gaffing. Nevertheless, owing to the marlin's speed, it is questionable whether on "three-six" the average fishing boat can keep up with him, and here again the matter of a club button for such fish is open to argument. However, the Tuna Club, to be logical, should either add a club button for the taking of marlin on "three-six" or else eliminate the purple button for broadbill on light tackle.

There is one more important policy to be determined with relation to Tuna Club buttons, viz: the giving of membership buttons and other prizes by the club for the killing of fish in Mexican waters. Here, again, a broad policy of opening new "button" classes carrying membership in the Tuna Club for anglers who take fish of specified weight with tackle regulated for such fishing would supply a new field for club membership and increase the jurisdiction

and power of the organization, without in any way detracting from local tournament interest and achievement.

Furthermore, unless commercial fishing is restricted, there will be no American fishing left, and Mexico will be the resource of the anglers. In this case, the Tuna Club will die a natural death of stagnation if it does not include Mexican buttons.

It has been noted by many of our best anglers that the aeroplane wire leader readily tangles on broadbill. While it is practical for an angler who desires the fish, rather than the fight to secure a broadbill, by giving him much free line which tends to enmesh him in the circling loops of an aeroplane leader, such a capture must be considered unsportsmanlike. If fish are struck and fought with a tight line, there is a minimum of such occurrences. The aeroplane leader is stronger than the old piano wire, and on broadbill may be used to great advantage, as it seldom kinks and then breaks, or becomes weakened through excessive strain. It also enables the fisherman to hook a swordfish with greater ease, because it is not stiff and unyielding like a fifteen-foot piano wire.

Fine records have been established on aeroplane leaders, and because the broadbill is becoming scarcer and more difficult to work, on account of harpooning, it is unfair to hamper future effort by requiring piano wire leaders. Because an angler adopts aeroplane leaders, let no one consider him unsportsmanlike; this wire, if correctly used, merely insures the rodman against unavoidable breakage. On account of its extreme pliability, great care must be exercised at gaff with aeroplane wire. The angler must at all times keep his rod tip placed so that the leader cannot loop or curl about the hands, arms or neck of his boatman, and this means a tight stretch of leader from rod to fish at all times. Many boatmen use a swivel, dividing the leader in half for a hand-hold at gaff, as this wire is extremely slippery and difficult to grasp securely.

Marlin seldom tangle in aeroplane leaders, and tuna do not need them. Although the Tuna Club specifications allow a fifteen-foot length of leader for tuna, such practice is inadvisable, since these fish rarely reach six feet over all, and as a rule, come to gaff from below, rather than on the surface, which

makes gaffing extremely difficult if the tuna is fifteen feet from the rod tip and below water.

The breaking strength of lines is a mooted question, and while the Tackle Committee should have the right to examine outfits after a record catch, if they so desire, it is unfair to test line-breaking strength a second time and then if it stands above the prescribed limit to disqualify a fish. Once a line is tested and passed, it should be considered good for all time. As a matter of fact, a line stretched a little by one fight will test higher than when new, and lines tested when first brought to a moist climate will test higher after being used therein. Perhaps the various clubs should purchase and test lines and demand that all anglers buy direct from them, which would insure regulated testing and pay the clubs a valuable revenue.

The rules as listed give a uniform trial for all anglers. Each must compete on equal terms with his fellows. If an angler prefers heavier tackle or a longer double line than specified, he does not go against good sportsmanship, because he has the right to waive restrictions and fish for the joy of the game alone. On the other hand, his records cannot be held

competitive in a district where others are required to employ lighter regulation tackle as a standard. However, a man who uses a longer leader than the standard, goes beyond sportsmanship, and his catches should not be considered as taken on rod and reel if such leader exceeds regulation length. A fifteen-foot leader brings the fish within gaffing distance. A twenty or twenty-five-foot leader does not do so and enables the boatman to handline a big fish when he gets near the boat, yet still out of reach of the gaff. Killing a fish on rod and reel means bringing the quarry to the side of the boat by aid of rod and reel—not bringing it partway and handlining it at the hardest part of the fight, the last few feet.

In a strange region, on new types of game, extreme in size, explorers must establish necessary precedents, but, nevertheless, fish must be hooked and killed by one angler. Leaders which, on account of their length, allow the handlining of fish before they are brought to gaff by the rod, disqualify such fish as being taken by rod and reel.

CHAPTER THREE

# *TUNA*

ABEAM of the boat a skittering bait flashes over the waves, hitting the crests and leaping the troughs. Above it a silken kite, borne by the westerly breeze rides smoothly, serenely, through the air, carrying a fascinating lure and imparting to it the life-like motion of a frenzied flying-fish essaying escape. In the stern an angler sits tensed; ahead is a rolling school of tuna. A strike is inevitable! The boatman, from his place at the wheel, turns for a moment; he alone seems calm as he warns:—

"Look out for him; make that bait jump!"

Obediently the angler lifts his rod tip and the bait ricochets across the water. Again it rises and splashes back. Expectation is intense! A shimmering green flash darts in behind and the water boils. Missed! Another flash as the great bronzed back of a tuna appears; he leaps out, grabs the bait, and pulls it under the surface in a swirl of white foam.

"Strike!" bellows the angler. The big reel shrieks, the straining rod quivers, nods rhythmically as the line whirs out, and the battle is on.

Such is the thrill of fishing for Pacific tuna with a kite.

This great sport commenced some thirty-odd years ago at Catalina Island. At that time tuna were appearing in great numbers off the coast of California, but methods and tackle used in catching them were very crude, and the idea of employing a kite to carry the bait had not yet been devised. Rods and lines were imperfect, reels were small, and our modern friction drag was yet to be developed. Although fish were plentiful, strikes were scarce. Anglers were at a loss to understand why tuna scorned a trolled bait, as it was generally known that they fed chiefly on flying-fish. Many ingenious devices were developed and tried without success. Boatmen even went so far as to spread the wings of the flying-fish by wires and endeavored to make them skip over the surface of the water in hopes of attracting an unwary game. Sea sleds were used to keep the bait away from the boat, and outrigger poles tried to less advantage. The few fish which did strike almost invariably broke the line on the first run, so great was their speed, the slender cuttyhunk literally being burned in two from the friction of the leather thumb

AN ALLISON TUNA UNDER WATER
Photographed under water by Mack Sennett

MAN-EATING SHARK AND PILOT-FISH

Under-water photograph made by Mack Sennett's newly perfected camera

drag. Then some clever soul conceived the idea of pouring water on the spool to keep the line wet, and more fish were saved.

In the summer of 1911, Captain George Farnsworth of the Avalon fishing fleet mystified everyone on the Island by bringing in great numbers of tuna while others caught none. Nearly every day saw the tuna flag (the banner indicating that fish had been taken) flying at the masthead of his cruiser "Mable." Naturally he was harassed with questions on shore, and followed and spied upon at sea, but he swore his anglers to secrecy, and by clever ruses outwitted pursuers. He wanted to perfect his idea.

A little later in the same year he let the secret out—he was using a kite to keep the bait away from the boat.

Blue fin tuna are a very wary game. Like all members of the mackerel family, they travel in schools, surfacing or sounding according to weather conditions and their fancy. They remain in fear of a boat and are disturbed by its wake to such an extent that they seldom will take a bait when trolled directly behind the craft. It is the kite upon which modern

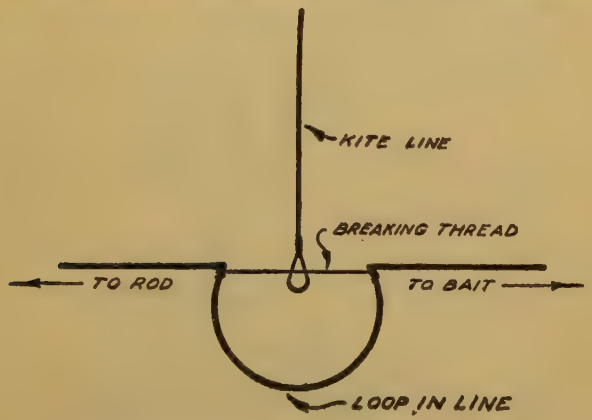
bluefin fishing depends, success varying directly in proportion to the skill of the boatman in handling it.

There are two methods in vogue for using the kite. The first and more simple is known as "trolling blind," that is to say dragging the bait hit or miss over the ocean in hope that a fish will see it and strike. This is especially useful in rough water where fish are hard to see, or with a green boatman, as little skill is then required in discovering or working tuna.

The other and by far the more interesting and successful style is to hunt the fish and, after location, put out the line and maneuver for a strike. Here infinite skill and judgment of distance are necessary on the part of the boatman. An expert can detect a school of fish where the uninitiated, and even one who has fished for a number of years, can see nothing. The variation of a few feet in the placement of the bait may make all the difference between success and failure.

When a school of tuna is sighted, the boat immediately is headed down wind to get below them, for a kite can best be raised by going into the breeze. Then the boat is turned back toward the fish, the

kite is launched and let out about one hundred and fifty feet, being tied to the main fishing line a few feet above the leader. The boatman heads his craft in the same direction that the fish are taking, being sure to pass them far enough away not to scare them; meantime the angler lets the bait upheld by kite run fifty yards from the boat. The guide then turns




Method of Fastening Kite-line to Fishing-line

the boat toward the school, passing in front, and hence above wind of it, since tuna practically always travel into the breeze. He judges the distance so that the bait will enter the school directly behind the leaders, for it is there that the largest fish will be found. Great care must be taken to keep the boat at a proper angle to the kite, for if the wake of the

former reaches the fish before the bait, it usually will cause them to sound and there will be no

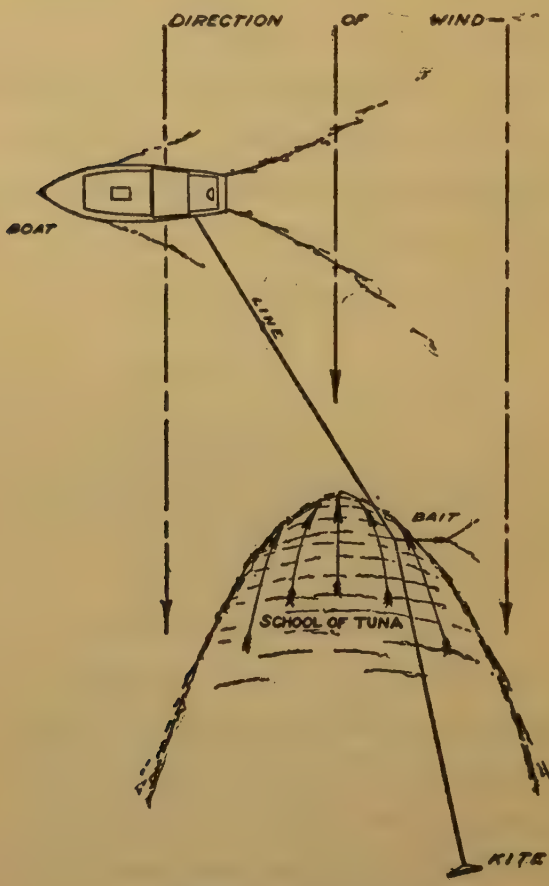



Diagram of Kite and Tuna

strike. On the other hand, if the boat is headed down wind too far, although the bait will be more off

the bow of the ship, and thus in a better position, the kite is likely to drop and fall into the water and much valuable time be lost. As soon as the bait is over the school, it should be jumped and splashed by pulling back on the rod; this gives it more life and seems to excite the game. When a fish takes hold he must be struck hard several times in order that the hook may be set properly. If tuna miss, drop a bait back to small ones; pull the lure away from medium size or big specimens.

When tuna are schooling on the surface their presence may be detected by the ripple or wake they cause on the water. They resemble, to a degree, a wind patch or "cat's paw," save that the wavelets which they make are larger and do not parallel each other as do ripples from the breeze. Often, while travelling thus, they will show their dorsal fins and tails as they flash through the swells. Sometimes, when feeding on small bait, scattered bunches of these fish will suddenly appear, lashing the water into foam as they pursue their victims. These flurries generally are of short duration, and if the angler is fortunate enough to get his bait into such a school he may consider himself lucky indeed. When acting

in this manner, tuna are apt to pop up at the most unexpected places, and it is folly to chase madly over the ocean in the hopes of approaching close enough for a strike, as such conditions exist but for a brief period and the fish will be down again before the bait is even near them.

Tuna are uniform fighters. They start off with a run of tremendous power and speed, often stripping a thousand or more feet of line off the reel in a few seconds. The drag must be eased during these runs, on account of friction, and because the less line there is on the spool the harder it is to take, by reason of the decrease in leverage. After the first mad dash, tuna settle down to a steady fight, taking line when they can get it. They never give up, seemingly becoming stronger as a fight progresses, and they circle almost continually, usually in a counter clockwise direction, and make a number of swift, short runs. Much labor will be saved in a fight if the fish is fought hard as he turns toward the boat and is held while completing the outer part of the circumference. A clever angler can bring a "button" tuna to gaff in a very short time, but if the fish

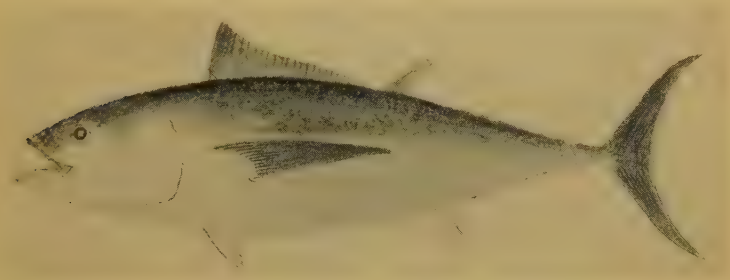
RAINBOW YELLOWTAIL (SO NAMED BY AUTHORS)

*Description:* This fish, which at this writing has not been identified, greatly resembles the runner of the West Indies. Closely related to the yellowtail, and has graceful, slender appearance, and beautiful coloring. Back is of light blue shade, with yellowish white underparts. Two brilliant blue stripes below which is band of yellow running parallel to lateral line from snout to tail. Mouth is fairly small, and tail forked. Five dorsal spines in front of tail, both on dorsal and ventral sides. Fish weighed twelve pounds.

*Distribution:* Specimen was taken at Ceralbo Island in Gulf of California.

*Habits:* Unknown.

*Capture:* Fish was taken on Wilson spoon and put up very game fight which was much like that of yellowtail.



YELLOWFIN TUNA—NEOTHUNNUS MACROPTERUS

*Description:* The yellowfin tuna is much like his brother the blue fin. except that his fins are slightly longer, and have more yellowish hue, noticeable to a slight degree in whole fish. He is also much like the Allison tuna, save that soft dorsal and anal fins are not nearly so elongated. On belly of this fish are six or seven narrow bars of white which run at right angles to outline of body.

*Distribution:* The yellowfin is found from waters of the Channel Islands to southern seas, and is common the world over.

*Habits and Capture:* Habits and capture of this fish are fully described in the Chapter on Blue Fin Tuna.

JORDAN'S CABRILLA—MYCTEROPERCA JORDANI

*Description:* This cabrilla is the one most commonly taken in Southern waters. Grows to large size, often attaining length of three feet or more. Is of a brownish olive color, with darker oval patches scattered in four rows along back. Ventral side is light brown varying to yellow. Pectoral fin is rather large and round, and tail concave. This fish, as is common with cabrilla, has a huge mouth.

*Distribution:* Jordan's cabrilla is found from the Gulf of California both north and south.

*Habits:* Lives around rocky points and coast lines. Does not seem to school.

*Capture:* All sorts of lures, both live bait and spoons will capture this fish. Larger specimens are best taken on trolled small fish.

CABRILLA BACALLADA

*Description:* The cabrilla bacallada resembles to a great extent Jordan's cabrilla (Mycteroperca jordani) both in shape and coloring, but may be distinguished from latter by smaller spots which appear on sides. Nine rows of these spots or blotches which parallel lateral line. Soft dorsal and anal fins long and have projecting tips which extend a considerable distance beyond base. It reaches a length of about three feet.

*Distribution:* Found from Mexican waters to the tropics.

*Habits:* Habits of this fish are similar to those of other members of its family.

*Capture:* This fish puts up a fine fight on rod and reel, but has the trait common to cabrillas of seeking to run into rocky holes on bottom. Heavy tackle must be used.

once gets his second wind a long battle will be the outcome.

Many species of tuna are found throughout the oceans of the world, but the two which most vitally concern California anglers are the bluefin and his brother the yellowfin (thunnus thynnus and thunnus macropterus). The latter are so named because of the predominating color of their fins and tails. Aside from slight minor differences both fish are practically identical in appearance and habits, although the latter is considered a trifle less game and takes a bait a bit more readily, while often the use of the kite is not necessary with these fish. The bluefin is the more common of the two, being the horse mackerel of the Atlantic, and the tunny of the Mediterranean. Recently, scientists have differentiated between the Atlantic and the Pacific species, but the variations are so slight as to make identification almost impossible, being in all probability caused by environment. These fish vary in size from a few pounds to individuals of 1000 pounds or more. The Tuna Club record is a yellowfin of 251 pounds, and the world's record, taken off the coast of Nova Scotia on much larger tackle by Zane Grey, is a bluefin

which weighed 756 pounds. While fish of this size reach the waters of the Channel Islands on occasion and the writers themselves have seen specimens, it approaches an impossibility to take them on rod and reel because of the depth of the ocean. Those who have caught the Atlantic tuna of great size claim that he is slower than his brother in the Pacific, and that his capture is facilitated by the shoal water where he may be played.

The bluefin make their debut near the Catalina coast toward the latter part of April, and generally are present in considerable numbers throughout the entire summer; yellowfin come in during the early fall and usually stay but a short time. Both species are migratory, coming northward from warmer climes to pass through Southern California waters. Their sojourn depends on the amount of bait they find, on the weather conditions, and harassing by net boats.

CHAPTER FOUR

## *THE BLUE BUTTON*

IN 1921 a new associate member entered the Tuna Club somewhat timidly.

The cool of the shaded interior was welcome after the glare and heat of the midday dusty street. The initiate had fished thirty almost fruitless days in 1920 and killed a single tuna of sixty odd pounds on heavy tackle. It was one of the largest fish he had ever seen, and when his Avalon boatman gaffed it carelessly after the angler had with much toil and struggle, weakly and thankfully forced it near enough, he was surprised and humiliated when his gaffer designated it "a little snoot."

Today, just before the start of the 1921 season, the entering angler—if he could be termed such—keenly felt his newness, his lack of experience, and although he realized he was a lucky man to have secured the services of "Tuna George" for his boatman, he was nevertheless aware that he was forcing his own untried presence into the "holy of holies" of big game fishermen, with whom he had as yet little in common.

He had just met George Farnsworth for the first time, reaching Avalon with an introduction which he thought insured him the best known expert on tuna as his teacher and guide in this second season's effort for a button and active membership in the world-famous club.

He had discovered that experiences with trout, salmon and even tarpon and sailfish did not receive much attention from the men he met, who wore blue, red and gold buttons and sometimes sported on their watch chains a special emblem, usually embellished with a fish in relief. His stories fell flat, and at first he thought his companions discourteous, until he sensed that other kills than tuna or swordfish held little interest to anyone on the island. Avalon and its anglers concentrated on the big game fish of the Pacific, and small fry were considered unworthy of attention or notice.

Two days before, when he asked some of the grizzled, sun-tanned boatmen on the pleasure pier where he could find Captain Farnsworth, he had met straight-eyed, appraising glances and prompt direction.

"Tuna George" was working on his boat, "Gray

Gull." He was a tall, heavily-built man, whose quick, lithe, sure movements were remarkable for one of his form. Farnsworth read the letter, looked the newcomer over with frankness, and said "if the latter would go fishing with him tomorrow, he would decide whether or not they would team together longer." This evident test was accepted and resulted in the angler being taken to sea the next day on a trip of over fifty miles from Avalon and return.

The "Gray Gull" proved her speed and handiness. Farnsworth worked his kite in his own inimitable way, while the angler thanked lucky stars that he was a fair sailor and did not object to the long, heavy swell, or to the nasty chop formed by the early westerly.

Today "Gray Gull" was being gone over; rods and lines were to be tested at the Tuna Club. Tomorrow would see the real start of the fishing. A quick, alert assistant secretary politely and skilfully went over the tackle, the rod being stamped "TC," the box holding the line initialed, and the line's breaking strain noted thereon.

The new associate sidled into the reading room where, after kindly salutation and introductions, he

was made at home. He suddenly found that after it was understood he would fish with Farnsworth he became of some value, and apparently, he was a nonentity no more. He appreciated that he was expected to "produce."

For three days "Gray Gull" searched the seas. She did not linger near the east end and, as the westerly appeared, seek shelter with kite aloft in the doldrums of the island lee. Not she! She flew her kite after locating tuna; blind trolling did not appeal.

In the late afternoons and evenings the new fisherman had time to study the records and the names on the gold medals in the prize cases, to hear talk of tuna, of broadbill and of marlin. No tuna were being taken, but reports from the waters southward gave promise.

The fourth day dawned a flat calm. If anything, a light easterly obtained. The water was leaden. As usual, "Gray Gull" darted away alone at high speed, this time going north of west along the island shore and away from reported fish. Long Point was passed. Bird Rock and Isthmus came into view and the course westward was continued, whereas on the first

days the ocean had been "checker-boarded" near home, but no kite flown. In due time the west end was reached. "Gray Gull" slowed down. She was the only boat in sight. Not a catspaw rippled the water, but far off shore a flock of birds wheeled, circled and screamed; perhaps hovering close to the surface; ofttimes anxious over one place; at others, searching here and there until again they came together and repeated their hovering.

Somehow, the birds excited the angler. He remembered other birds and other fish, for example near Block Island, with bluefish years before.

"There's your school of tuna," said Farnsworth, "let's get ready."

With quick, trembling fingers, the novice passed the double line through the guides and tip, and the boatman very calmly and, to the angler, very slowly, attached the end of the "double" to the short piano-wire leader, and next placed on the hooks a flying fish carefully selected from the generous supply. In truth, "Tuna George" seemed hard to satisfy, rejecting several fish baits before finding one to his satisfaction.

"Gray Gull" lay still, gently rising and falling

to the easy swell, but the sea was calm. How could one fly a kite? The boatman let in the clutch and slowly went past the tuna, looking them over, yet saying nothing. The fisherman was impatient—anxious. Would his guide do anything? How could he get the kite working without the wind?

The boat left the tuna which could be seen surfacing without feeding. Apparently, the fish lay resting almost lazily, their dorsals moving, slowly advancing, the school shimmering and the water vibrating around them.

"Small fish," said Farnsworth, "let's find bigger ones," and he deliberately left the tuna and continued his former course.

It was a let-down. Disappointment gripped, yet the novice restrained his desire to appeal or demand a try for the fish.

Somehow, intuitively he realized that the silent, forceful guide knew his business and was selecting the wise course. Nevertheless, the reaction from expectancy and hope to blank nothingness, over an ocean devoid of fish, and to a zone without birds, was exasperating.

The boat stopped, the guide methodically pre-

pared his kite, while the faintest suspicion of a barely perceptible breeze stirred the water. At the same time to windward a bird appeared miraculously from nowhere, and almost instantly was joined by a second—by three—by a dozen—by scores, with others continuing to arrive from everywhere.

In a moment the scene changed to one of action; the birds screamed and circled and hovered as before. The angler's hope revived, but he could see nothing else to indicate the presence of fish. Yes! Suddenly a thrill shot through him. The waves under the birds boiled, foamed and burst, and one—two—six—a dozen big, dark fork-tail forms leaped upward or rose and slashed on the surface and disappeared. The birds wheeled, flying wildly in all directions—here, there, away and back again. Then, with apparently a pre-concerted action, all concentrated, and beneath them the sea swirled with the rush of big tuna.

"Hundred pounders—watch your tip—take off the drag," came to the now fearfully excited angler, as the guide holding the kite with one hand, steered and advanced his throttle with the other, while "Gray Gull" bounded forward, tearing in a wide

circle, partly away from fish and birds. The line, thumbed to prevent over-running and backlashing, rushed out, and the kite, held by a short length attached to the 24-thread of the angler not far above the leader, rose slowly and flutteringly, while the flying-fish bait, supported by kite and given life by the strain of the fast moving line, now stopped from running off the reel and so held by the drag, approached the tuna.

"Make him jump!" "Make him jump," came advice. The slow heave of the rod made the flying-fish skip forward above the water in jumps of six to ten feet. The angler watched the bait and tried to see the kite, and at the same time looked for tuna. He knew that his kite was falling as the boat turned in its arc slightly from the wind, and he realized it was a question of calculation of height of kite, upheld by wind and boat speed, judged against distance and direction to be covered without forgetting the movement of tuna. The kite was coming down faster. The bait was nearing the tuna splashes. "Gray Gull" tore on.

"Make it jump!" "Look out for him!" This time the words came as a quick, sharp command. Behind

his bait a black form raged, tearing with incredible speed and parting the flat surface like a plowshare. It hurtled through the air and crashed in foam and spray just behind the bait. Another fish, with unbelievable velocity, threw itself free and jumped beyond the lure, descending on the water with a whacking splash.

The kite was close to the waves now, but the bait still jumped forward as if on wings. Then everything seemed to happen at once! Another huge, leaping tuna flung ahead of its fighting, struggling fellows, rose in a clean curve and hit the bait squarely between its gaping jaws. The angler struck on instinct, the intuition born of other strikes in other waters on quickly moving quarry, little realizing that the skill of the master had kept his line tight long enough to secure the rise before the kite fell. The reel roared, the line ripped from the spool, literally flew through the guides; the rod bent with the heavy drag. The tuna, in his first mad, headlong rush, sped away, outward and downward, with appalling force and paralyzing rapidity. "Gray Gull" wheeled and turned; foam flew as she rounded yawing in almost her own length, following the direction of the fish

by the knowledge the steersman gained from the moving line.

The angler, from the start of the 600-foot run, could do nothing until the boat swept swiftly past the top of the belly of the line, when it was possible to recover some, and yet necessary to exert properly applied power to do so. The boat stopped. The angler secured more line and then came the dogged fight, the slow reeling, pumping foot by foot, inch by inch from a foe which never yields. The tuna may be forced and turned by a superior strength, but he never gives up. He dies dead game.

Words from the guide: "Don't make that loop with your tip before you stop. All the way down. Go slowly and reel on a tight line."

Meanwhile, aiding the angler, "Gray Gull" backs toward the fish, which fights wickedly and forcefully, and jerks savagely. Although unseasoned, the fisherman senses that the game is yielding; but the moments fly, and sometimes the tuna gains. The left hand finds it hard to stand the strain when the right turns the reel handle; the right hand is cramped, the novice is fighting hard, but not skilfully.

More encouragement as the man at the rod labors on. "Hold him on the outer circle as he heads away." "That's right, now pump as he turns toward you."

The double line appears; somehow it moves through the tip, hesitates, then creeps along the rod guides. At last, it is on the reel, and tired fingers find better holding while, wonder of wonders! there is a long, monster fish turning slowly, just out of reach. He is silver and green. He approaches in spirals—he is very near. But oh, what a strain! The arms crack, yet hold. The leader swivel retreats, advances and at last slowly approaches the boatman's outstretched hand. It wavers, the fish tries to take line as he swings outward. He turns back. The wire is seized, and there is a swish, a slight thud, then a huge splash, and "Tuna George" has gaffed a new man's first sizable fish.

"Take off your drag. Watch him."—Splash—thrash—water flies everywhere. The men are "wringing wet." Farnsworth is doing something with a rope looped at the end. Then he shifts his gaff and, to the tired man's delight, the huge head with open jaws and quivering, silvery side, green upper body and black back with the trembling, orange yellow

finlets, of a big tuna come up over the edge. Another quick, heaving pull, and the fish flops over into the cockpit. He is conquered. Oh, the joy of it! The wonderment! The beautiful thing he is!

Then fearfully comes the thought of his weight. Is he a "button" fish of one hundred pounds?

After securing him, head and tail by two ropes, the boatman slaps and prods the prize thoughtfully, appraises him and remarks, "above a hundred; the leader's missed, let's get some more."

Some hours later the "Gray Gull" slipped into Avalon Bay with seven tuna, averaging close to one hundred pounds, safely aboard; the largest of these was well over the Blue Button limit.

A thoroughly tired but happy fisherman received his official award from the hands of Harry Adams, one of the oldest and best known of California's anglers, and a past president of the Tuna Club.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## *"TUNA GEORGE"*

THERE was a knock on the door of Room 10 at the Tuna Club, and the cheery voice of Mr. Percy West, the assistant secretary of that famous organization, sounded over the transom.

"Seven o'clock, sir, and it looks like a beautiful day; the tuna ought to be up with weather like this."

"Thanks, Mr. West; tell my father I'll be ready for breakfast in a few minutes," sleepily yawned the younger man as he rolled over in bed and threw off the covers.

The process of dressing over, both anglers betook themselves to the Acme Café to enjoy a hearty repast. Here they met other fishermen, also breakfasting, and with them discussed the day's prospects. No tuna had been taken at the Island for nearly two weeks and the hopes of those who hunted them were fading. Today might see a change, and the long overdue schools once more might make their appearance. Anglers are optimistic souls; with them tomorrow is always another day.

It was the second of July in 1924, the first day of

the fishing season for the two rodmen, who were anxious to try out their new fishing cruiser, "Fairplay." This year they were to fish with "Tuna George," Captain George Farnsworth, the most famous of Avalon boatmen. They wished to see this great fish scout in action, since many true stories of his uncanny prowess had reached their ears. Three seasons before the older man had taken many tuna with Farnsworth, but the younger had yet to land his first fish with him.

"Fairplay," with the new boatman aboard, awaited them at the Tuna Club dock. They made their way down the landing-stage and stepped into the cockpit. Farnsworth greeted them cheerily, and headed "Fairplay" through the maze of small craft which filled the bay and into the open sea. It was a beautiful morning, perfect for surfacing tuna, and their hearts were gladdened by the tang of the salt air which cleared from their heads the drowsiness of an early start. Truly it was "great" to be alive on such a day.

As Avalon faded astern Farnsworth turned to them, taking his eyes for the moment from the course ahead.

A 163-POUND BLUEFIN TUNA TAKEN AT CATALINA ISLAND

"We're going to steer south-east by south for two hours and forty minutes; the tuna'll be there, and they'll be big fish, over one hundred and fifty pounds," he said.

To the mind of the younger angler, for he did not know his boatman, this prediction seemed an impossibility. It was like saying that a particular patch of kelp which "Fairplay" should pass would harbor dolphin, or some other equally difficult forecast. He longed to ask the boatman how he knew where the tuna might be. With other fishermen he simply had cruised until game was sighted, and did not believe it possible to tell where it would be found unless one already had seen the school. Farnsworth had not been on the water for two weeks, and no tuna had been reported for almost as long a time. He remained quiet, however, and watched the course and the clock above the wheel with much interest.

When the allotted time lacked but a minute or two of completion, "Tuna George" stopped the boat.

"There are the fish!" was all that he said.

Both anglers climbed atop the jitney and looked. The ocean was as calm as Avalon Bay, but of tuna

there was no sign. There were no ripples to mar the flat surface. There was nothing to indicate schooling fish below. They turned to the boatman with questioning glances. Doubt assailed the mind of the younger man: too often he had seen the tell-tale indications of surfacing fish not to know them when he saw them. He believed that there were no fish there.

"Where are they, George?" he asked. "I can't see them."

"Those fish are down just now," replied the boatman. "I know you can't see them, but they're there just the same; big ones, nearly two hundred pounders, and they'll be up on top in about twenty minutes; then we'll go after them. Let's run out a bit further; maybe we'll see some other schools."

"Fairplay" resumed her course and the anglers kept watch. They felt that their boatman was trying to fool them into believing that he had proved his prophecy. In their misguided ignorance, they thought that they could see fish as well as anyone else. Had they not spent four years in hunting tuna?

At the end of ten minutes "Fairplay" turned back. As she approached the spot where the fish

were alleged to be she slackened her speed. What caused that dark patch of water just ahead of the boat? Tuna? It must be. It was! Farnsworth pulled the clutch and the three men watched those giant fish as they plowed through the swells and pushed wavelets with fins and noses.

The school was a small one, but it was composed entirely of large fish. The conditions were perfect for their capture. In a minimum of time the rod and reel were rigged and the kite let out. It was the younger angler's day to fish. He took the rod, endeavoring to calm the nervous anticipation which always assailed him on such occasions, and keeping his eyes glued on the bait, which skittered over the surface toward the school.

"Look out for him!" warned the boatman. "He's after it!"

With a great splash the huge form of a tuna leaped into the air behind the bait, taking it in his jaws with a rush and pulling it under water. Vainly the angler endeavored to set the hook. The fish was too fast for him, and before he could get a tight line the game had ejected the lure. Disconsolately the

man reeled in the mangled flying-fish. Keenly he felt the disappointment of loss.

Farnsworth came aft. Disgust clouded his features.

"You'll have to be faster than that if you want to hook 'em," he said. "I use the double hook rig, and you've got to strike as soon as the fish hits the bait."

Truly there was no excuse for missing such a perfect strike. While the hooks were being re-baited the two anglers watched the school. The fish were plowing forward into the freshening breeze, ever ready to rise to a lure.

Once more the line was let out and the kite flown; once more the bait skipped toward the school. The angler braced himself—this time he would not miss. Again came the terrific strike and the reel spun. Fortunately the fish was well hooked.

After fourteen minutes of give and take, the indistinct form of the giant appeared below the boat. Swiftly the angler worked and brought the leader to Farnsworth's outstretched hand. In a few short seconds the tuna lay in the bottom of the boat. The scales on the dock at the Pleasure Pier gave his weight as 163 pounds, the second largest fish of the

season, and the largest that the angler ever had landed.

Many times since that day has Farnsworth demonstrated to the anglers his uncanny ability to find and see tuna. How he does it can only be surmised, since he will tell no one his secret. Often when he would point out schools which the others could not see, they would ask him what signs to look for, but he seemed unable to explain or to show them the indications. Constant familiarity with these fish must have given him an intuition which is lacking in others.

CHAPTER SIX

## *ELEVEN TUNA IN ONE DAY*

THE east end of Catalina Island faded astern, its outline becoming fainter and fainter in the blue haze of distance as "Fairplay" sped southward on her course. The wake, stretching back almost as far as the eye could reach, formed a straight, almost unbroken line as it converged toward Seal Rocks, now lost from view. Ahead the bleak, rolling hilltops of Clemente Island were beginning to take form through the mists which hung over the ocean. It was a perfect day with but the faintest suggestion of an easterly breeze daintily skimming the surface of a leaden sea. "Fairplay" swayed, rather than rolled, in the oily swell from the west. The steady roar of her engine and the "swish" of her bow-wave alone broke the calm stillness of that placid July morning.

Captain Farnsworth and the angler were seated atop of the jitney, their eyes searching the sea for signs of game. Neither spoke; it was as if words would destroy the beauty of the channel. Concentration on the ocean occupied their thoughts and

formed a barrier to conversation. As Clemente drew nearer, the clouds overhead broke and the water took on an opalescent hue. Marine life appeared on the surface and scattered gulls and shearwaters wheeled in the air above. The boatman's gaze became more intense—evidently he saw something which the less experienced eyes of the angler failed to detect. He remarked that there were indications of tuna, but did not change the throttle. Eagerly the other scanned the ocean for signs of fish; he could see none.

When "Fairplay" came abreast of the sheep fence on the north side of the Island, the pilot slowed her down and pointed seaward. There, less than a mile off the port bow, was a shimmering line in the water. A school of big tuna! Although there was not a breath of wind, "Tuna George" got out the kite; how he expected to use it his companion could not see; nevertheless he fastened leader to line and waited. Without a breeze it is almost impossible to work a school of fish with the kite. The line was run out and "Fairplay" headed for the fish. Her speed kept the kite in the air, directly in the stern wake. Farnsworth cut straight through the school. Appar-

ently there was not a chance in the world of getting a strike.

"Jump your bait!" he yelled.

Halfheartedly the angler made it splash.

"Look out for him! Make it jump!" called the boatman. Again the angler indifferently raised and lowered his rod. The bait ricocheted across the water.

There was a swirl behind the lure; a tuna leaped up with a splash, felt the hook and tore line off the reel. Miracle of miracles! The angler was so surprised at the strike that he almost forgot to hook the fish. After a fast run of over six hundred feet the tuna stopped and gradually the rod worked him toward the boat. It was a contest of uncertainty, as the line see-sawed back and forth through the guides. At the end of twelve minutes of hard fighting the leader came within the grasp of the boatman, who reached out and slipped the big gaff hook into the gleaming sides of a tuna far above the hundred pound mark. The fish was hauled aboard and made fast on the stern of the boat where he flopped and struggled for a time before becoming still. Hooks

were removed, rod and reel made ready, and the bait attached for another try.

By this time many more schools of tuna had risen to the surface. Everywhere one looked were fish, rolling, flashing, flipping and splashing with fins that showed dark against the lighter colored sea. There was no need to concentrate on any one group, the ocean was alive with giant tuna. "Fairplay" once more was turned toward the nearest school, with kite flying and bait skimming the water. Again the lure dragged directly in the stern wake and the angler was sure that the fish would go down before it reached them; however, he jumped the flying-fish more eagerly. Bang! the water boiled as another huge glistening shape hurtled for the bait. Strike! Another tuna had taken hold. He was landed in short order.

It seemed incredible that fish would take a bait offered in this manner. During the years that our rodsman had fished at Avalon he had seen many schools worked thus when there was no wind, but there never had been any strikes and he had come to believe that fish would never rise to a bait if the school had been cut through by the boat. He ques-

tioned Farnsworth about this peculiarity, and received the answer that when fish were working as they were today such a thing was possible. Although the angler studied them carefully, he could detect no difference from all the others he had seen.

About this time another of the Avalon fishing boats came into view. Those on board spotted the tuna and put their lines out. Our fisherman noticed to his great satisfaction that they, too, were ignorant of the fact that the fish were working differently than usual. They tried to fly their kite to leeward of the boat, but were unsuccessful and it flopped into the water as they made a turn. After a few more attempts they gave up and stood off awaiting the coming of wind. Although they saw the "Fairplay" land several fish, they were at a loss to understand how the strikes were secured.

By noon "Fairplay" had taken six tuna. Most of them were over the hundred pound limit. A "time out" period was called for lunch. During the repast both men sat on top and watched and studied the fish. A slight breeze began to come in from the west. It would increase toward evening and provide fine fishing early in the afternoon. The other boat, still

A DAY'S CATCH OF BIG TUNA
This was the Record number of Tuna taken in one day

GEORGE C. THOMAS, 3RD, CAPTAIN FARNSWORTH AND TED AUSTIN WITH BIG TUNA

The smallest of these Fish weighed 124 lbs.

in sight of the "Fairplay," immediately put up its kite and started about the business of catching a few tuna. The first cast which they made through the school resulted in the hooking of a fine fish, which the angler, evidently a novice, landed after a long hard battle.

Feeling much refreshed by the luncheon and eager for more sport, those on the "Fairplay" again turned her nose toward the game. The schools were still on the surface, heading into the stiffening westerly breeze and anxious to take a bait. It was a sight well calculated to stir the blood of any sportsman.

During the next hour and a half three more of the quarry were landed, and the angler sat back in his chair to take a breathing spell and to marvel at the luck which had befallen him. Nine tuna in the boat; a goodly number of them over the hundred pound mark. Never before had he seen such fishing! It was the day of days! Feeling more than a bit tired and thinking that he had caught his share of fish, he turned to Farnsworth, asking him to take the rod for a while.

"Not on your life!" said George. "You finish what you started."

Wearily the tired man picked up his rod. His arms ached. There were plenty of blisters on his hands. He wished to call it a day and go home, but there was a chance to make a record catch, and then, too, he could not go back on his boatman. Opportunities like this did not come every year, but he secretly hoped that the fish would go down. Ordinarily they would have sounded in a stiff breeze.

Once more the line was put out; once more a fish hooked and landed. Farnsworth turned to the angler.

"These tuna won't stay up much longer; we'll get one more and go home."

The other heaved a sigh of relief and concentrated all his efforts on killing that last fish. The schools were harder to work than before; they were bucking the wind at a great clip, almost ready to sound. At last the strike was obtained. Weary arms heaved on the rod, cramped fingers turned the reel handle, and aching back muscles strained. Inch by inch the fish was forced toward the boat. The angler saw him in the swell, and gratefully noted that he was small. The leader slowly came to the gaffer's outstretched hands. There was a quick movement,

a flash of white spray and the eleventh tuna of the day lay securely in the bottom of the boat. The victor felt that never in his life-time would he wish to see one of these fish again.

"Fairplay" once more was headed across the channel, her prow toward Avalon and her work well done. Spray flew as she pushed her way through the chop. Proudly she rose to meet each swell. The steersman peered through the water-bespattered windshield, his eyes on the course, while the angler relaxed on the cushions, thinking of the eleven finny warriors in the after cockpit and the new record to which "Fairplay" had carried him.

CHAPTER SEVEN

## *THE RED BUTTON*

FOR four years an angler had searched the seas for tuna, for broadbill and for marlin. He was the proud possessor of a Blue Button; but although numerous tuna had acknowledged defeat to his Murphy hickory, and a few marlin had been secured, none of the other four "buttons" was registered.

It was early in the season of 1925 and he had killed a number of fine tuna of over one hundred pounds on "heavy." Farnsworth assured him that their mates were too large for a start of light tackle fishing, most especially as they were surfacing in the open sea and a long fight on light tackle was difficult in rough water.

On this particular day Harry Adams accompanied the tyro, and neither of them knew where the launch "Fairplay" was bound, as she gathered headway after leaving the Tuna Club wharf. The skipper advanced the throttle and turned his boat's bow to the east, skirted Pebbly Beach and soon passed Seal Rocks at the island's end. The compass next showed the course a little east of south. Log-

ging close to 20, "Fairplay" rushed forward, rising buoyantly to the westerly swells beyond Church Rock.

It was typical morning weather, with a faint trace of westerly drawing along the south shore but the wind failed as an offing was gained. The course as taken more than hinted Clemente, and the two fishermen were assured of their destination as slight indications of fish were passed without notice by the guide. The sky was overcast and no trade winds need be expected until the upper airs had dispelled high fogs and allowed direct sunlight, although it was probable that the afternoon would show the usual dancing whitecaps of the westerly chop.

Catalina grew lower on the skyline and faded. Clemente Island commenced to emerge from its mists, and soon the high point of its tallest peak was outlined above the fog. The surges were lessening in size, which proclaimed that the launch was beginning to feel the influence of the lee of Clemente's west end. The surface of the ocean appeared flat and dark as land grew nearer.

Little had been said in the dash across the channel. The novice was most uncertain of his ability

with the 9-thread line of light tackle. He knew how much scarcer red buttons were than blue ones, and in his own efforts with the light tackle, he had failed dismally for several seasons to stop the first mad run of a single tuna. His companions were lost in their own thoughts, or else were silent under the spell of the beauty of the crossing.

"Fairplay" now turned along the shore about a mile out, and with diminished speed slipped through the quiet water more silently, while the three men looked for "signs." The expanse was without ripple of breeze and appeared to have little life, although here and there bait surfaced and a lonely bird or two flew aimlessly.

What is that shimmering of the water closer in? It cannot be current, because it is not a distinct line. Is it bait or tuna? "Fairplay" heads to leeward of it, which means much under these calm conditions, but before the anglers have decided the identity, their launch stops. The fisherman is handed his light tackle outfit. The boatman works with the kite and bait, for apparently he believes the indications mean tuna of right size for 9-thread. Fortunately, there are no round hauls in sight. "Fairplay" is below the force

of a westerly, which is just commencing to give coolness and tang. Evidently in the air above there will be enough breeze to fly the kite without the necessity of extreme boat speed.

Up goes the kite! Its line is attached to the double, and out runs the fishing 9-thread, the angler watching carefully, lest by giving too much, the kite may fall. At approximately one hundred and twenty-five feet the word "enough" from the wheel causes the "throwing on of drag," the strength of which is carefully tested. "Fairplay" forges ahead, passes to one side of the vibration in the water marking the tuna below, then turns with the light wind abeam and her bait, skipping daintily across the dark surface, nears the fish.

The schooling tuna wake to life, several at once plunging upward to the bait. The angler reels to take out slack and then when the line is taut, and a dark form disappears in a mass of splashes, he strikes as hard as he dares. The fish is hooked. Almost as quickly as the quarry runs, "Fairplay" with rudder hard down, whirls in a short circle, and follows the fish in order to relieve as much strain as possible from the bellying line and to reduce the

amount taken from the reel. Well the steersman knows that at six hundred feet, or possibly less, the thread will break from friction alone, and that if the fish turns at anything like right angles the line may snap. Fortunately, this tuna holds to a straight course, and the first run is stopped and some line recovered.

Slowly now the angler gains, forcing his fighting adversary closer and closer. When almost to the boat the fish realizes the danger, and exerting reserve power, makes several hard runs, thereby gaining much line. Perhaps it took twenty minutes to bring the quarry near the first time, but before it approaches again almost an hour has passed. The angler, though cautioned several times by his comrades, strains the arched rod close to the breaking point.

At last the leader is within reach and in a second the flash of the gaff and the thrashing of the tuna announces a conquest. When weighed, on the return to Avalon, the fish gave 82¾ pounds and proved the gold medal light tackle kill of the year—a sizable catch on a 6-ounce tip and well above the Red Button limit.

The father's luck seemed to promise success to the

son, and next day, in company with the captain, this duo fared forth in chase of the same school. The westerly came in sooner. The fish were not in the old neighborhood. Time was required to locate them or another school, but tuna finally were discovered in rough water well off the Clemente shore.

It did not take long to rig the tackle, and soon the bait approached and passed over the fish, but failed of a strike. Attempted again, the effort was successful—a fine specimen hitting the lure was well hooked, and its first mad run fortunately stopped.

The captain turned to the angler's father and whispered, "We must force this fish in shore; 'twill be a long fight, but if we make the lee, we'll get him."

After the initial rush the fisherman labored on, but ever as he gained line the "Fairplay" crept away from the tuna, and yet always nearer and nearer the smooth water.

It was a cruel test, heartbreaking to the man on the rod who struggled bravely, gaining some line, but unaware of the reason, at once losing it again. Two hours of relentless toil and patience were consumed in working the unsecured prize out of the

current "rip" and into comparatively smooth water. This was the only chance. By this time, both man and fish had second wind. The tuna fought near the surface, appearing above and then being hidden by the swells that came heavier outside and were becoming more and more noticeable in the lee.

After the first hour a tuna often becomes stronger for a time, and this was now the case. It was a protracted, stubborn struggle. The angler was handicapped by an increasing sea and a surfacing fish. The battle promised to go into darkness, and the wisdom of Farnsworth in working the fish into smoother water was confirmed. Outside in the heavy seas the rod would have had much less chance. Finally when things looked darkest, the finny fighter became weaker. After a continuous effort, during which rod and line were tested to their utmost, he was brought to gaff and secured. Under the conditions of the capture this fish put up the fight of a much larger one under average circumstances. He balanced the scales at 79¾ pounds.

"My goodness," said the victor, as he noted the weight by electric light at ten o'clock the same evening, "how in the world did Mrs. Keith Spalding

LIGHT-TACKLE TUNA

ever land her record one hundred and five pound tuna on light tackle—some angler, that little lady!"

## Small Tuna

Farnsworth spotted a bunch of tuna in early October, very late for bluefin, and this presented a great chance to get the high light tackle fish of 1929, as no 9-thread captures were registered for the season.

The captain pointed out the school to Colonel Tisdale, who was a guest on "Aerial," for while his young friend was trolling for marlin the Colonel sat watching from the canvas-protected bridge.

"Look over there, Colonel!"

"Where, Cap? Is it a marlin?"

"No, it's tuna—'way over there." "See how black that line shows just beyond the far slick, about four miles away?"

"No, I can't see anything, but let's go."

"All right, tell George to get in his line."

While "Aerial" ran for the tuna the kite came out. A short piano-wire leader appeared with hooks already baited. By this time the fish were visible to Tisdale. Everything was in readiness. The kite, as usual, mounted perfectly.

The young angler let out the line, the bait skit-

tered prettily, and jumped enticingly to the short heave of the rod. It reached the head of the school. Crash! One had it. The line rushed, and the reel whirled as the tuna sped away. "Aerial" followed closely and the rodsman worked hard, his bamboo pumping in line fast and surely. In a few minutes the tuna was gaffed—a small one of about fifty pounds. Another bait arranged—kite up—a second strike. A short, sharp struggle after the first wild rush, and a second fish was aboard.

Just then Tad Gray, with A. C. Brode (the Tuna Club president of the year) on the rod, came in sight, and two of the best, if not the very best, tuna boatmen worked the school. Here was skill to the 'nth degree. It was a lesson in tuna fishing, watched by Tisdale with delight and concentration. "Swastika," (Gray's boat) would make a cast from one side of the fish, "Aerial" from the other. Every time they worked the bait across the school, they hooked fish. Brode was "fast." "Aerial" was fighting a fish. It was the acme of craft and technique in the difficult art of kite-flying for tuna. Neither boat interfered with the other. At no time did either captain frighten the fish by too close an approach.

Now a third boat appears. It is of the yacht type, brass polished, bright work glistening. It has been trolling for marlin. On approaching "Aerial" its people see a tuna take the bait which orients the school. The new boat charges right through the midst of the fish, dragging two baits, but of course with no catch. Next, they try a kite, but it does not fly. Then they dart away at high speed for nearby Avalon.

Meantime, Tad and George work the school again, and Brode and young Thomas hook and fight a tuna apiece, with success.

Back thunders the fast boat—up goes a new kite. Bait is attached and the yacht crashes again through the school, the bait following behind and jumping in the wake of the boat. Again there is no strike.

"Swastika" meanwhile has landed another fine fish and swings past again to work the school, securing a slashing strike, Brode hooking neatly. Something happens to the yacht's kite. Possibly a tangle takes it down, but no fish is hooked. The kite is wet and therefore out of commission.

Farnsworth has given his angler light tackle and again run his bait past the fish to see a tuna hit the

LOS ANGELES MUSEUM
EXPOSITION PARK

lure, feel the steel and dash away on its run. Everything must be timed to the minute and boat and rod worked in unison to save strain on the whistling 9-thread line. There is no time for anything but keen perception, fast teamwork and an exciting contest.

At this moment, the yacht takes what it considers an opportunity to run close to "Aerial," not only hampering her strategy, but also endangering the line.

"I'm Mr. So and So, of Los Angeles. Will you kindly lend me one of your spare kites?" calls a yachtsman.

"Hell, no!" yells Farnsworth, whirling "Aerial" in a quick turn, his eyes never off the spot in the water where the small line cuts the surface.

Later, after the high light tackle fish of 1929 is safely aboard and Colonel Tisdale has taken his first tuna, the captain announces that he is out of bait, but that eight kills for twelve tries is not bad.

On the run home out of a contented silence someone remarks: "A man don't lend his wife or his kite, not even when he's fast to a light tackle tuna."

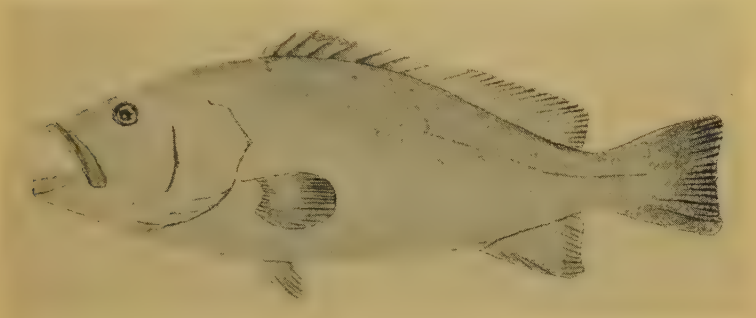
PARGO COLORADO—NEOMAENIS COLORADO

*Description:* The pargo colorado greatly resembles the cabrillas. He is of brick red color which darkens toward dorsal side. Fins are rather small and tail lunate. Head slopes quickly down from above gills, and mouth is large. Approaches a length of three feet.

*Distribution:* This fish is found from Pacific coast to tropical waters, and especially in the southern part of the Gulf of California.

*Habits:* Habits are like those of most bass and cabrilla.

*Capture:* May be taken on any medium-sized spoon or lure trolled at slow speed behind boat.



CABRILLA CALARNARIA—MYCTEROPERCA ROSACEA

*Description:* This cabrilla is most brilliantly colored, being a beautiful golden orange hue. Back is deep orange and fades through gold shades to warm yellow on belly. Whole fish has appearance of a burnished sheet of metal. Not as heavily proportioned as most cabrilla, being rather thin. Fins are small and follow coloring of body. It grows to perhaps thirty pounds or more in weight.

*Distribution:* Throughout southern part of the Gulf of California, and down coast of Mexico, but not as common as most members of its family.

*Habits:* The habits are typically cabrilla-like, in that it inhabits rocky shores and bays.

*Capture:* The cabrilla calarnaria may be caught on practically any large spoons or trolled bait. Fights well, and should be taken on fairly large tackle, since, once hooked, it seeks the rocks in which it lives, and will break the line.

CABRILLA PINTA—EPINEPHELUS ANALOGUS

*Description:* The cabrilla pinta is one of the largest cabrilla, and many specimens taken on trip weighed slightly less than the hundred-pound mark. Is of a dark mottled brownish hue, with five or six wide bands of even darker shade running down sides from back, fading out as they approach ventral side. Whole fish is covered with small black dots. Pectoral fin is very large and almost round in shape, but other fins are comparatively small; mouth, however, is large, as is head.

*Distribution:* Found throughout lower part of Gulf of California, and both north and south along coast of Mexico.

*Habits:* Rocky shores and bays are the favorite hiding places.

*Capture:* Heavy tackle is necessary for this fighter as he has trait of running into rocks which cover bottom. It is essential that first run be stopped, for, if the fish once gains shelter of crevasses on bottom, it is practically impossible to dislodge him, and line must be cut if not already severed by jagged edges of the rocks. As much drag on reel as angler can hold may be applied, for first run is not so fast that line will break.

CREOLE FISH—PARANTHIAS FURCIFER

*Description:* The creole fish is a small member of bass family. A dull reddish color, darker and slightly mottled on back, and lighter toward underbody. The specimens which were taken from "Radio" were of small size, hardly going above twelve pounds. Probably grows to much larger proportions. Mouth is rather small, and somewhat perchlike in structure. First dorsal fin runs into and is continuous with soft dorsal, making practically one single fin.

*Distribution:* Found from Cape San Lucas to the Galapagos Islands.

*Habits:* Habits greatly resemble those of the perch, in that it seems to prefer sand to rock bottoms.

*Capture:* Best taken on cut bait by still fishing, but will strike at slowly trolled small spoon. Has but little food value.

CHAPTER EIGHT

## *BROADBILL SWORDFISH*

THE broadbill swordfish (Xiphias gladius) truly has been called the greatest of all American big game fish. Certainly he is the most difficult to land. While not so fast as the tuna nor so spectacular as the marlin and tarpon, broadbill stand in a class by themselves. For sheer strength and ability to ruin tackle they cannot be equalled. Less than half the broadbill which strike are hooked, and an even smaller percentage of those hooked are landed. It has been estimated by anglers who fish for them in the Pacific that only one out of each twenty seen will take a bait. Once fast, his runs are almost irresistible and are heartbreaking to an angler. He never gives up, and virtually always is dead when finally brought to the boat. Although he occasionally is very speedy on the surface, and even acrobatic when so inclined, this great fish seldom performs for a rodsman: rather, he is generally a slow, almost sluggish fighter, who takes his time and seemingly with deliberation attempts to wear down anyone who has the temerity to hunt him.

Fights with broadbill are not as a rule things of beauty, where the grace and speed of the fish delight the heart of the observer. They are, rather, backbreaking feats which thrill the angler to the bottom of his soul with admiration for a fighting spirit. With the broadbill there is no frenzied rush of panic at the prick of the hook, no aimless dashing hither and yon over the water, no purposeless changes of tactics. Instead there is a determined, concentrated effort to defeat the rodman in a stubborn, relentless —most forceful, fight. It truly has been said that when one has conquered a broadbill in a fair struggle he has done something of which he may well be proud.

This fish is the most powerful that swims the seven seas and many expert anglers have fought him a dozen hours or more only to acknowledge defeat at the end. It would be foolish for a novice to attempt to handle a broadbill until he had undergone many fights with tuna and marlin.

The broadbill is the only true member of the swordfish family. Found in practically all the oceans of the world, his meat has been in great demand for centuries and harpooners have hunted him un-

der many flags. From the Mediterranean Sea to the Pacific his sickle tail and high dorsal fin cut through the water, and on both our eastern and western coasts he is hunted by sportsmen. Little is known of the breeding habits of this gladiator of the sea. Small broadbill are found in the Mediterranean. The writer had the good fortune to view a specimen but eighteen inches long in a museum in Naples. The Mediterranean is one of the few known places where fish of this small size may be found.

Scientists claim that the swordfish undergoes a complete change of structure when he reaches a length of twelve inches. Before this he is a curious, misshapen creature scarcely resembling the broadbill we see. His early life is a matter of conjecture, few men having had the opportunity to give it study. We do know, however, that he grows to enormous size, for harpooners have captured many individuals upwards of 1000 lbs. in weight. The largest ever landed on recognized tackle weighed 573 pounds, and was killed in Southern California waters.

The spring of the year brings Xiphias to our shores, where he makes his sojourn throughout the summer months. He returns to Mexican waters in

the fall. He travels slowly, going up the coast as far as Point Concepcion before turning back for warmer climes. Migrating individually rather than in schools, although, occasionally, scattered bunches of swordfish may be sighted, he seems to be very hermit-like in his habits. During the middle of the day he may be found swimming upon the surface of the ocean with both dorsal fin and tail plainly visible. Under calm weather conditions these tell-tale indications may be spotted for a considerable distance. They are distinguishable from the more triangular dorsal and flopping tail of the members of the shark family not only by a different shape but also by the veins or corrugations which run through both fins. Unfortunately, as he loafs along in this manner, the broadbill seldom is given to feeding; rather he is sunning himself and easily is approached by one of the many harpoon boats which seek his meat for the markets.

It has been noted by those who hunt them that broadbill vary in action upon different days. During certain periods these fish become very nervous and fidgety in their habits, sounding quickly at the approach of a boat, while at other times they will

glide majestically along the surface, caring little for what goes on about them. The remarkable feature of this is that on certain days all of them act in much the same manner, and they seem to have some preconceived signal to guide their demeanor. If one should see several broadbill jumping in the Clemente Channel he may take it for granted that the fish off Point Fermin are doing the same thing. When broadbill leap out of the water they start with a sudden rush, hang suspended in mid-air for a moment with the head slightly elevated, and then fall back on their sides with a great splash. Their jump is similar to that of the marlin swordfish, being easily distinguishable from sharks and other big game by a lack of turning and twisting. It is interesting to note that when broadbill jump near a boat they almost invariably turn their underbodies toward it. We may surmise that they can thus better see the craft, but at best this is only a conjecture.

The most common bait used in Pacific swordfishing is a small barracuda or mackerel, although almost any fish of this size will answer the purpose. Flying-fish are tried with success when the former are not to be had, but broadbill hit them extremely

hard, often fouling the hooks and otherwise messing up the bait, perhaps because they fear the quarry will elude them by flying. The lure is fastened to the hook through the head, or tied to a piece of string sewn into the mouth to insure more flexibility, and is trolled at a considerable distance behind the boat. The line seldom is put out until the game has been sighted, as the possibility of a "blind" strike is very remote. When a broadbill has been found, the bait is passed in front of him by circling and bringing the hook across his path. When the boatman feels that the fish can see the lure, he stops the boat and lets the bait sink down in the water, often throwing in the clutch every few seconds to give it more life. Generally the swordfish will go down to look things over, but whether or not he will strike depends entirely upon his mental attitude. Usually he will come up far astern, having scorned the dainty morsel.

When swordfish take a bait, they do not grab it in their mouths as do other fish; rather they first slash with their swords as if to kill before making off with it. The idea that broadbill spear their victims is thought to be erroneous, although occasionally a small fish may become impaled on the sword

MRS. KEITH SPALDING'S BROADBILL
This is the only Broadbill Swordfish ever landed by a lady angler

426-POUND BROADBILL SWORDFISH

by chance. For these reasons plenty of line must be allowed to run freely off the reel when the fish hits, in order that enough time may be provided him to get the bait securely into his mouth. If the line is jerked too soon the quarry generally will become suspicious and leave; if too much time is permitted he may feel the hook and rid himself of it. There can be no fixed rule to govern the amount of line allowed, since fish behave differently. The angler and boatman must use judgment and act accordingly. When the drag is thrown on, the fish should be struck hard several times.

The angler must bear in mind that he is commencing what in all probability will turn out to be a long fight, and so should conserve his strength to the utmost, gaining line whenever possible but being willing to let the fish have his own way when so inclined. Few broadbill fight alike; in this fishing the unexpected is the rule rather than the exception, and the man must concentrate on his task if he would court success. Some fish jump considerably. The writer hooked one which broke water sixteen times in all; but many wage a deep, almost unending battle, often swimming in a definite direction

and keeping to this course throughout practically the entire fight. Occasionally a hooked broadbill will go into a frenzy, thrashing on the surface, and making quick surface charges with many turns. At such times the angler must keep his head and maintain a tight line, lest the hook be thrown.

A fresh swordfish is hard to handle at the boat, and gaff hooks with detachable heads secured to ropes should be used to avoid personal injury. It is best to insert the gaff in the back just behind the dorsal fin and under the backbone to prevent tearing. No one should attempt to gaff a broadbill who has not had experience with other large fish.

CHAPTER NINE

## *THE WHITE BUTTON*

HEAVY TACKLE broadbill angling is a different game from any other fishing, and not many men can speak with authority on the subject, for few have killed more than one or two specimens. It exacts unending patience, and requires years of effort.

Some anglers rave over the fighting qualities of Xiphias gladius, of whom the noted Boschen, the victor over them in the initial battles, R. C. Grey and George Thomas, 3rd, hold the first and present records.

Boschen fought them on piano-wire leaders, establishing the first record of three hundred and fifty-five pounds, and when this was beaten, in 1917, he exceeded the new catch by killing a swordfish with a weight of four hundred and sixty-three pounds. In both catches, Farnsworth was his boatman. This weight has never been topped, except on the aeroplane wire leader, although the gradually increasing figures of new achievement are almost all claimed to have been taken without entangling fish. Neverthe-

less, aeroplane wire leaders sometimes become curled and twisted around broadbill so that the monsters are more easy prey. Ample evidence substantiates this, but the aeroplane wire is so much stronger that anglers prefer it.

Most men after killing one fish and securing their white button are content to let broadbill alone, unless there is a lack of other game.

After the writer won his blue button he always tried any broadbill he saw, but seldom made special efforts or expeditions for them. He hooked and lost a few of these monsters after passing varied baits before many specimens, and learned of the strength, endurance and wariness of the quarry. It was 1925 before he boated his first fish.

This particular broadbill was a medium-sized one of three hundred and forty-six pounds. He took the bait, became entangled in the wire, although he had been struck on a tight line, and easily was brought to gaff. Unfortunately, the fisherman had two men on his boat—an engineer besides Farnsworth—and when the latter was battling the fish on the gaff, the angler called to the former to give the captain a second gaff. The angler needs must stand by the rod

and he could not see the lashing fish hidden behind the side of the boat. The engineer, not knowing the Tuna Club rules, put another gaff into the fish as it lay thrashing against the boat, and then handed the gaff to Farnsworth. The "green" fish broke one three-quarter inch rope, pulled the gaff on the other one into a straight piece of metal, and made off untangled.

After a long, hard fight without harness the angler killed the fish, and it was triumphantly weighed in and the prized white button awarded.

The next day, in talking over the matter, the gaffing by the second man was understood, which made the return of the button necessary. The rules allow but one gaffer to aid an angler. The fish was disqualified later and does not appear in the records.

In 1926 the same angler went after broadbill with determination, and eventually hooked a fish near Santa Barbara Island, twenty-five miles west of Catalina. This swordfish threw the hook, but it caught near his dorsal, the leader then going through his mouth from the right side, coming out the left corner, thence to the line and rod. The fish was worried by this condition, which gave the rod an upward

pull of great leverage, and he jumped constantly near the boat and plainly showed the hook close to his dorsal and the leader's position.

As long as the line led without slack from the left side of the fish to the rod, the swordfish was at a disadvantage, but should he turn and the wire leave his jaws, the hook quickly would tear out.

The angler therefore put on his harness and, fighting the big game with all his strength, forced him continuously and brought him exhausted to the gaff. This was a "lucky break" in giving the angler the advantage of upward lift, which made the monster jump and accounted for his quick capture, but this fish was struck and fought on a tight line, and was never in any way entangled by wire. As a matter of fact, the hook was not imbedded beyond the barb, and it was the flat pull of the leader across the side of the fish and through the jaws which made it hold. This broadbill weighed four hundred and twenty-six pounds and won the White Button; besides which it was the record victory for the current year.

Since that date a remarkable feat of taking broadbill on 9-thread has been accomplished by James W.

Jump, a very successful user of light tackle. The Purple Button for general angling has been offered by the club for this fishing. The writer has fought broadbill on light tackle and has found that they tangle as readily or possibly more quickly on this outfit than on "heavy." It is his opinion that the capture of such game on light tackle is not adaptable for general effort. The fish cannot be worn out on these weapons of attack by most anglers; he must either become accustomed to the boat and thereafter gaffed while "green" or else he is tangled and taken helpless. Nevertheless the killing of a broadbill on "light" deserves unstinted applause.

As already has been stated, generally, the broadbill is a deep, slow fighter; he moves off majestically after his first flurry and leaps but seldom. Jump's capture on "light" is a feat which proclaims a skilful angler and a boatman willing to risk a nasty fight at the gaff. Such a victory should receive great praise, but it is not the type of angling suitable for the average fisherman.

Zane Grey uses 39-thread line with success and claims this to be the most sportsmanlike rig for the game. Farnsworth believes that broadbill may be

tangled with almost as much ease on "three-six" as on "light," and gaffed when so constrained.

Many long fights with Xiphias gladius prove that his fighting qualities and endurance are remarkable, and it does not sound reasonable that the general run of men can exhaust such a fish on light tackle sufficiently to get him to gaff.

This swordsman of the sea will be exterminated if the harpoon continues to capture him for commercial purposes. Surely no sportsman will buy swordfish for food if he realizes that by so doing he aids in the extinction of this wonderful quarry.

The broadbill furnishes the mystery of our big game angling. We have the spectacular in the marlin, the romance and lure in finding and working tuna with a kite, and while certain anglers may not try for Xiphias gladius when marlin or tuna are to be had, nevertheless, he is the largest of our big game and is not only stronger and more dangerous than the rest, but is so uncertain in his habits that his admirers claim every specimen acts differently from the rest.

Undoubtedly a man does not know broadbill until he has fought and killed a number. These fish beat

most anglers who try for them, yet the experts who have learned the ropes are able to kill several specimens in a good season. Perhaps it is more difficult to take broadbill than any other game of the sea. To make them bite is an art. To hook them is most difficult, and to fight them requires skill as well as strength.

CHAPTER TEN

## *WORLD'S RECORD BROADBILL*

DURING the first six years that he had fished the waters of Catalina it had been one of the angler's greatest ambitions to capture a broadbill swordfish. He envied such men as Boschen, Adams, Grey and Parsons, and hoped that some day he, too, might wear the coveted White Button of the Tuna Club and take his place with those who had conquered the ocean's mightiest fighter. In this period of time he had secured many strikes, hooked numerous fish, and brought several almost to gaff, but at the crucial moment something always had gone wrong and the quarry escaped. One particularly large broadbill was hooked in the channel off Point Fermin, fought for nearly seven hours, and finally worked close to the boat—where a faulty leader parted and allowed the fish his freedom. It seemed as if these swordfish constituted a jinx to the angler; he had about given up all hope of ever landing one. Often he discussed the situation with his boatman, who invariably would reply:

THE WORLD'S RECORD BROADBILL SWORDFISH TAKEN ON REGULATION TUNA CLUB TACKLE.
WEIGHT 573 LBS.

"When you get a broadbill, he'll be a record."

These words seemed cheerful enough, but when it came down to offering real consolation the outlook was far from bright. Day after day "G. C. F." combed the sea in search of fins. Evening did not see the red, white, and blue swordfish flag at her masthead. It was still the same old story—no fish.

On the sixth of August in 1927, "G. C. F.," with boatman and angler aboard, sped out of Avalon Bay. As she cruised over the slate-colored water, her passengers kept watch from above, searching the sea for signs of fish. Broadbill, especially, were her quarry, since many of these fighters had been reported in the channel waters. This particular morning was as beautiful as any a sea angler ever gazed upon. There was neither ripple nor swell to disturb the calm surface. The ocean teemed with small fry of all sorts. Mackerel schooled and fed as they made their way northward.

At ten o'clock the keen eyes of the skipper spied an almost indiscernible object off the port beam. The wheel was put hard over and the launch made her way toward the find. It was a broadbill. He was cruising lazily on the surface with both fins showing,

apparently in no mood to take a bait. He seemed to be a small fish. A fresh barracuda adorned the hook as the line was let out. "G. C. F." circled and the quarry went down toward the lure.

"Look out for him! He's going to hit it!" yelled George.

Hit it he did! So hard and fast that the big Coxe reel nearly backlashed! He ran off perhaps a hundred feet of line, and just as the angler made ready to strike him became suspicious and dropped the bait. He would not come back to it nor even show again. Disappointment silenced the fisherman—once more he had lost his chance. Farnsworth, too, had little to say; it was one of the "breaks" of the game.

"G. C. F." continued her search, pointing her prow in a northwesterly direction, and approaching the swordfish ground off Point Fermin. Several more broadbill were sighted and worked, but none seemed inclined to take a bait. They were not feeding.

Shortly after eleven-thirty, the guide noticed a commercial fisherman on one of the albacore jig-boats beckoning them and pointing to the ocean off his port bow.

"Wonder what he sees," mused Farnsworth, as he

put the wheel to starboard. "Guess he wants to show us a swordfish."

As "G. C. F." approached the other boat the high dorsal and weaving tail of a monster broadbill became visible beyond it. He was swimming unconcernedly through a school of surfacing mackerel, apparently well-fed and not in the least interested in the two craft cruising so near him.

After waving thanks to the fisherman and acknowledging his cry of "Good luck," Farnsworth and the angler made ready with their tackle. They circled the fish, drawing a barracuda across his path in such a way that he could not help but see it; yet the quarry was not interested and ignored the offering. A flying-fish was tried with no better success. Finally a nice fresh mackerel was put on the hook. This, too, passed unnoticed in front of the monster and the man's spirits fell. The fish was not to be tempted.

"We'll fix that bird," said George. "Hand me the little mackerel spinner."

In almost no time the skipper was pulling in a flashing, struggling mackerel, an incomparable bait.

The swordfish hook was inserted through the tip

of the victim's jaw in such a way as to allow him freedom of movement, and the line once more let out. The angler waited, trying to convince himself that a strike would be forthcoming.

The bait had no more than circled Xiphias, before he went down toward it, the rapid flashing of his tail showing that he was more than interested. He rushed the mackerel and, enraged by its frenzied efforts to elude him, slashed wildly with his broadsword, hitting his victim and putting an end to its struggles. Then he seized the bait and rushed off with it.

"Strike!" yelled the angler.

When the fish had taken nearly two hundred feet of line the heavy drag was thrown on and the man struck as hard as he dared. The reel sang a welcome music; the angler quivered with excitement. Once more he was "hooked up."

For the first hour and a half the fish made a series of fast surface runs which seemed to tire him. These were punctuated by resting periods during which he sounded and headed into the freshening breeze. Several times he came close to the boat and those on board could see his tremendous size. It was a battle

of endurance, and the fish seemed to have a distinct edge in the encounter. The fight gave the angler a chance to try out Farnsworth's new fishing chair, placed in the bow of the boat to enable the man at the wheel to follow better every move of the battle. It worked like a charm.

After two hours the fish ceased his surface tactics and sounded. It was backbreaking work trying to lift that monster swordfish against his will. Three times the angler worked him up to the boat, but not quite close enough for Farnsworth to grasp the leader; each time the fish would rally his ebbing strength and tear line off the reel. Then he went down and stayed down. Rod and line could not move him and the angler was discouraged.

At the end of the third hour the fisherman's hands were tired, cramped and blistered. He asked for gloves and Farnsworth left his place at the wheel to get them. He returned with a pair of heavy cotton ones, resurrected from somewhere in the engine room, and handed them to the rodman, who donned them with much relief and turned back to his task. Unfortunately the gloves which the angler had thought would come in so handy proved a hindrance

rather than a blessing; they had been lying in the bilge, and were soaked in oil. The angler had to grip the rod as hard as he could to keep from losing it, and the cramps which by this time had more or less numbed his fingers returned more painfully than ever.

Farnsworth now suggested that he don the harness; it would bring relief to aching arms, and put the strain of the fight on his back; then, too, he would be able to exert more strength upon the rod and perhaps work the fish close enough for the gaff to end the struggle. At first the angler refused; a foolish prejudice against such a device made him object to what he thought was artificial aid. He felt that he wanted to bring the swordfish to the boat as he had brought all the other game which he had fought, by hands and arms unaided. He believed that it would be taking unfair advantage of a wonderfully game fighter. Harnesses were all right for old men and weaklings, he would lick the fish by his own strength. But pride goeth before a fall; soon aching fingers could hold the rod no longer, and he turned to his boatman.

"Bring me that confounded harness, I'm licked

and I know it. I spent a long time getting fast to this darned fish and I'd give a lot if the hook would pull out right now."

Farnsworth went below again, and came up to the bow with the leather contraption.

"Here, put this on," he said. "Many men would give a lot of money to be in your shoes."

"Well, to be perfectly frank with you, I'd give a considerable sum right now if they were," answered the tired man.

But with the support given him by the harness, the angler was able to hold his own again. He even gained on the fish, and finally brought it close to the boat. It was a monster, and he gazed at it with a great longing. Then he became overconfident in his seeming triumph and lay back on the rod so hard that the leather strap which held the harness parted; it was a tense moment, the rod itself nearly going overboard in the excitement. Frantic fingers clenched it and slackened off the drag to ease the strain. Away went the fish, and with it the angler's confidence of winning the battle. The boatman spoke words of encouragement, but they fell on deaf ears; the fish had been so close and victory so nearly as-

sured that disappointment was all the keener. However, the angler renewed his efforts, and was able to readjust his broken strap.

After what seemed an interminable period, the harness once more was functioning, and things began to look brighter. Foot by foot the game was forced closer, the quantity of line on the spool grew, and spirits rose with the fish from the depths. At last the double line came in sight, then it passed the tip; at length it was beginning to show upon the reel. Farnsworth left his place at the wheel, and stood, gaff in hand, in readiness. The leader reached the rod tip, and the angler swung it around to the boatman's waiting fingers. The fish raised no fuss as the big hook was inserted in his side, but lay gasping on the surface, beaten.

Trembling with excitement and extreme weariness, the angler, with tired fingers which seemed more like thumbs, undid the line from the swivel, and made the giant fish fast. It was impossible to lift him aboard the boat, and towing was necessary.

As darkness had fallen during the latter part of the encounter, the ride back to Avalon was under the blackness of a semi-tropical night. The angler sat

in the stern of the boat, his eyes on the towing swordfish, and his mind on the triumph which he had won. As the phosphorus in the water flashed over the prize his thoughts roamed to the first time that he had fished these waters. That had been eight years before, and he had taken a small albacore which caused him no end of trouble. Then as now he had looked upon the broadbill as the epitome of sport; he had not been disappointed.

Gradually the lights of Avalon drew nearer, and rousing from his reverie the victor came back to the present. How much would the catch weigh? The more he looked at it the smaller it seemed, and when at length it was lifted to the dock he began to have grave doubts whether it would go over 200 pounds and bring him the coveted button. It is a peculiarity of fish of this kind that the longer they are looked at the smaller they seem.

Quite a crowd of curious spectators lined the wharf, and when the monster balanced the scales a cheer went up. Five hundred and seventy-three pounds; a new record.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

## *MARLIN SWORDFISH*

A PURPLE sickle cuts through the waves and rides the swells. It appears for an instant and is gone; again it momentarily flashes into view in the choppy sea before being hidden by the next surge, but keen eyes have marked its erratic progress and a fishing launch turns to intercept it.

"Marlin!" cries the man at the wheel.

Rod and reel already are prepared and the baited hook is cast astern. The line is let out and everything in readiness as the boat heads across the path of that darting fin. An indistinctly wavering mass of purple appears in the stern wake.

"Look out for him! He's at the bait; let him have it!" shouts the boatman in one breath.

A slight, almost imperceptible touch is the only warning as the fish takes hold. Instantly the angler frees the spool; line slips off swiftly as the reel whirls. Its speed slackens, hesitates as if in indecision, and then increases greatly. The cuttyhunk rips out through the guides.

"Throw on your drag!" cries the boatman.

By Courtesy of Mack Sennett

A MARLIN SWORDFISH FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE

By Courtesy of Mack Sennet

A FOUR-HUNDRED POUND MARLIN ON THE SURFACE

By Courtesy of Mack Sennett

A MARLIN IN DESPERATE BATTLE TO FREE HIMSELF

When the strand comes taut the rod raises in a graceful sweeping arc and the flashing form of a marlin hurls itself into the air.

Wherever fishermen gather, there are always discussions as to which fish is the most spectacular to kill on rod and reel. There can be little doubt in the minds of those fortunate sportsmen who have taken marlin swordfish (Tetrapturus mitsukurii) that this acrobat of the deep offers the greatest variety of thrills and gyrations. His fast, leaping, dashing runs on the surface never will cease to amaze those who hunt him. The Atlantic flaunts her tarpon; the Pacific her marlin; men who have taken both declare the latter superior. His frenzied efforts to shake a hook cannot be surpassed.

There are two species of marlin swordfish commonly hunted by anglers—the striped marlin and the black marlin. Both are closely related to the sailfish and are found practically throughout the world. The striped marlin is the one more commonly taken in American waters; his near brother, a larger and much heavier fish, is more indigenous to the tropics. Several specimens of the latter have been sighted

in the vicinity of the Channel Islands, a few have been hooked, but thus far none have been brought into Avalon, although a few captures are reported from the Mexican coasts. These fish reach tremendous size, and there perhaps are many individuals far too large for capture on rod and reel. The record for marlin swordfish is held by Captain Lawrence Mitchell; his fish was a black marlin, taken in New Zealand waters, and weighed 986 pounds.* The California record is 372 pounds. The largest marlin ever taken in North American waters weighed 509 pounds and was landed at Cape San Lucas by Willets J. Hole.

As the later chapters of this book are being written, it is noted in the daily press that Zane Grey has captured a species of marlin at Tahiti, which is reported to be a new kind. The angler has christened it "Silver Marlin." It is stated the fish weighed over six hundred pounds. This catch proves the contention of the writers that there are many other unknown fish in Pacific and Mexican waters, and that the field for new effort is most interesting and intriguing.

* This record recently has been superseded by Zane Grey with a striped marlin of 1040 lbs., taken at Tahiti in the South Sea Islands.

Marlin travel in schools or in scattered groups and arrive in California seas during the latter part of August. Generally September is the best month for this fishing, although they may be taken until late fall. They feed chiefly on anchovies, sauri, sardines, flying-fish, and other small fry, charging into schools of these unfortunates and slashing right and left with their bills, before turning back and leisurely picking up those they have killed or crippled. Flying-fish are the commonly accepted bait for marlin, being fastened to the single hook through the head and trolled behind the fishing launch in the stern wake. Two anglers may fish at the same time, and occasionally two swordfish are hooked at once. Under these conditions both fish seldom are landed, for extreme skill is necessary in the handling of the boat, and if the lines cross or the fish get too far away one or the other breaks off.

The length of line while trolling makes absolutely no difference to success, as marlin are not in the least boat-shy, and often come right up into the back wash from a propeller for the bait. The writers have seen swordfish take the hook a few feet

from the boat. Many boatmen are in the habit of using what are termed "teasers" while fishing for marlin. These teasers are flying-fish or other baits, fastened to short lines without hooks, for the purpose of attracting swordfish to the launch. When the fish comes after the teaser, the latter is pulled away from him, and the fishing line reeled up so that he may see the bait.

To the writers, teasers always have seemed superfluous, being a hindrance rather than an advantage as marlin sometimes sneak up and grab one of them without being seen. Had the teaser not been there, almost assuredly the swordfish would have taken the hook. Frequently marlin will come up behind a bait, following it perhaps for a mile or so without taking it. If the speed of the boat is increased on these occasions, a strike often will be forthcoming, but it needs a great deal of courage on the angler's part seemingly to run away from a fish.

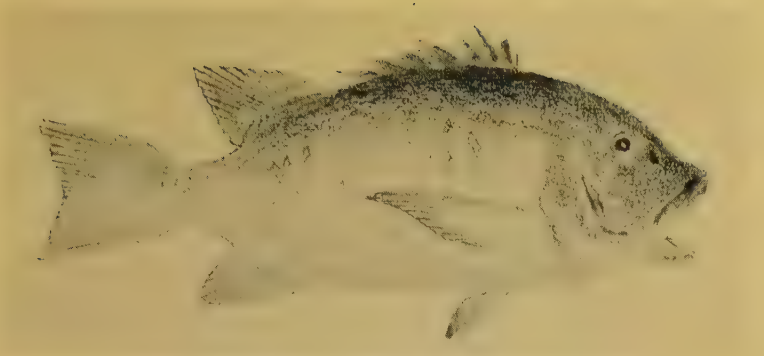
When marlin hit a troll they do not grab it in their mouths as do other fish; rather, they seize it between their upper and lower bills before swallowing, and seem to approach the lure sideways, turning

it before gulping it down. These swordfish as a rule strike with a slight, almost imperceptible rap or tug, and an angler must be on his guard at all times in order not to overlook his chance. "Express train" strikes are rather rare, but occasionally fish will grab the hook with a terrific rush, and the angler has even had them backlash his line, an inexcusable occurrence. As with the broadbill, line must be allowed to run freely off the reel immediately the fish takes hold, otherwise he will become suspicious and drop or throw the hook. Some anglers wedge the line behind a bit of wood lashed to the rod in such a way that it will jerk out at the slightest pull and run smoothly off the reel. This is not advisable, however, as it makes the rodman careless, and will cause him to miss strikes. When trolling for marlin, every hit should be taken as coming from a marlin until the man is absolutely sure that it is something else. Ofttimes a fisherman will imagine the strike as being a shark and try to pull the bait away, thus losing a long sought opportunity; it always is best to play safe. A shark generally takes a bait with a series of jerks, but even experienced

anglers may be fooled at times. The bills of a marlin leave two distinct depressions on a small fish just behind the gills, while a shark tears the lure with his jaws, so a missed strike generally can be readily classified by observing the bait.

When on the surface, marlin usually swim down wind, riding the swells at a speed approximating six miles an hour. At such times they rarely show their dorsal fins but swim low in the water, with their sickle tails occasionally flashing into view. They are identifiable without difficulty while swimming thus, and rarely mistaken for anything but what they are.

As soon as a marlin is sighted, the boat is turned so that the lure will pass directly across his path. Since these fish have remarkable eyesight, often seeing a bait under water for several hundred yards, there is little danger of passing them if they wish to attack. However, care should be taken correctly to judge the speed of the fish, and not to run them down. In a choppy sea it is imperative to follow the quarry's movements with utmost concentration, lest sight of the evasive fin be lost.



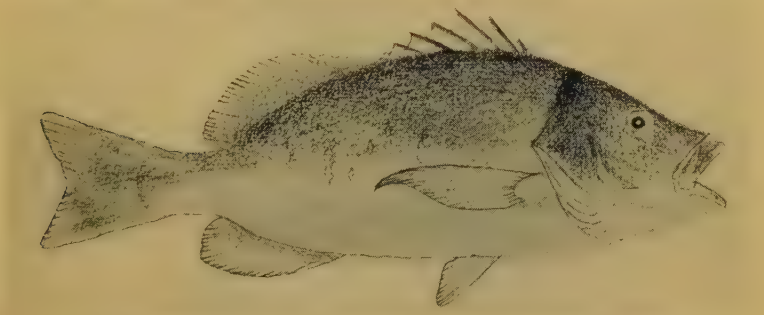
PARGO RAISERO—HOPLOPAGRUS GUNTHERI

*Description:* This fish is a small member of the cabrilla family which may be identified by pointed soft dorsal and anal fins. Mouth is like that of a sheephead in structure and upper part of head slopes quickly, being concave toward the snout. Pectoral fin is narrow and pointed and tail notched. Greenish above, with coppery pink belly, although head is of an olive shade. Eight cross bands of warm brown unequally placed along sides, which fade shortly after death.

*Distribution:* Found from Pacific Coast to tropical America.

*Habits:* Habits are typically bass-like.

*Capture:* Trolled spoon of medium size makes fine bait for this fish, but light tackle should be used.



PARGO AMARILLO—NEOMAENIS ARGENTIVENTRIS

*Description:* This fish greatly resembles, both in shape and coloring, the pargo raisero, but the fins are slightly longer and not so pointed. The head also is much the same, but the coloring of the fish has a trifle more reddish hue.

*Distribution:* It is found from the Pacific coast to tropical America.

*Habits:* The habits of this fish are similar to the pargo raisero.

*Capture:* Its capture may be affected in the same manner as other members of the bass family.

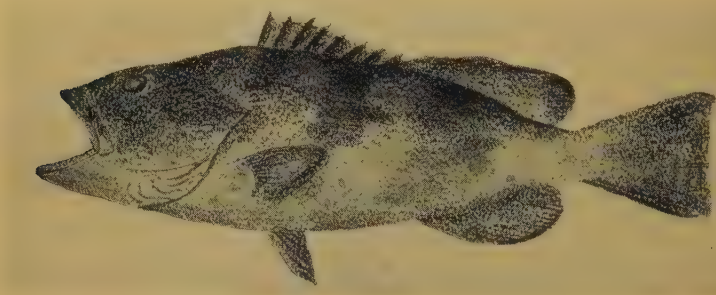
KELP ROCK BASS—ROCK BASS—PARABRAX CLATHRATUS

*Description:* This little fish, known throughout Southern California waters as the rock bass, is of dark brown and reddish color on back, fading into yellow orange shade on underbody. Mottled bars, patches or stripes of darker hue along dorsal side. May be recognized by large mouth and sloping forehead, which becomes concave as it approaches snout.

*Distribution:* The rock bass is an inshore fish, ranging from slightly south of Turtle Bay to California waters.

*Habits:* Large patches of kelp along shore line hold a fascination for rock bass. May be found practically throughout the year in native habitat. Like most other members of family, does not seem to school, but lives in communities.

*Capture:* Lightest of tackle should be used in taking this game little warrior, for he seldom reaches a weight of more than ten pounds. Will strike on small artificial lures.



RED TIPPED ROCK BASS

*Description:* This fish, a typical bass, could not be identified and has been named "Red Tipped Rock Bass" by authors. A dark brown specimen of small size with mottled back and sides. Pronounced red edge to lower lobe of tail and anal fin. Pectoral fin is tipped with red, and is fairly small. Belly of orange hue. It does not seem to attain a weight of much over ten pounds.

*Distribution:* Only captures of this fish were made at Ypala Point, south of Cape Corrientes.

*Habits:* Prefers rocky shores, and does not seem to school.

*Capture:* No specimens were taken on troll line. Cut bait was used over side of "Radio" and fish were caught on small bass rods.

The smallest marlin on record at the Tuna Club weighed but 61 pounds; the largest, taken near Avalon, a beautiful specimen of 430 pounds, was disqualified because an inexperienced boatman unfortunately shot it at gaff.

CHAPTER TWELVE

## *THE GOLD BUTTON*

THEORETICALLY, the taking of a heavyweight marlin of two hundred pounds or over on 24-strand is not a hard task: practically, it is very difficult. It is not a case of being unable to handle the fish on regulation "heavy," it is inability to find and hook one of such weight. The Gold Button is hard to secure.

In 1921, an angler had a strike and subsequent argument near Clemente with the first marlin he ever fought; but unfortunately, tired hands, after a hard battle, were unequal to the task of properly working a new type of reel, with the result that a backlash and broken rod occurred when the game was close to gaff. The line with attached fish was transferred to another reel and rod, and after capture the marlin weighed two hundred and twenty-six pounds, but the broken rod disqualified it.

For eight years a search of big marlin followed. Some were seen: once or twice a strike resulted, but none were hooked on "heavy." Whenever 24-thread was used, small marlin were caught; if light tackle

was tried, none struck at all, or else big fish which broke the line.

At last, in desperation, with both marlin buttons unattained, the fisherman, during the great marlin migration of 1929, elected to use light tackle until he won his Green Button. This had been accomplished, so now he must use "heavy" until he killed his two hundred pounder.

On a morning in early September he left his home in the suburbs of Los Angeles, drove rapidly to the California Yacht Club near Wilmington, there at nine o'clock to meet Farnsworth and the launch "Aerial" for a trip across the channel to Avalon, for a few days' marlin fishing. Both angler and boatman were on time, and "Aerial" swung down the harbor, her heavy-duty Hall-Scott thrumming rhythmically with 1600 revolutions of the screw driving her at over seventeen miles.

"You'll be fast to a marlin in thirty minutes," said Farnsworth. "Saw a lot of them three miles off Fermin; big fish, too. This is the day for the Gold Button."

Congested wharves were slipping by, the commerce of the port of a large city crowding inner and

outer harbor, and it seemed impossible that so near this hustle and bustle a school of marlin could be found. The lighthouse on the breakwater hove in view, was passed, and the thirty-five foot special fishing machine flashed seaward, pointing a trifle to the west of the Avalon steamer course. The early mists were lifting. The usual morning calm prevailed; the sea was quiet—a fine chance for working and fighting big fish.

Ten minutes from the breakwater and the gulls and a few pelicans marked the marlin. Rod and line were rigged, leader and bait ready for attachment. The captain knotted line to leader carefully as he slowed the boat before reaching birds and fish.

A big pelican dove straight downward with extended bill and buried himself like a plummet for a second, arising to sit complacently with this bird's customary wise and unconcerned expression, while he showed by a gulp, as he raised his head and swallowed, that he had secured an anchovy or small bonita.

The gulls flitted back and forth, dipping their beaks into the water as they flew low or settled for a moment and evidently secured food.

Just then, close to the boat, a marlin scintillated, and cutting swiftly through the top of a low wave crest slashed with his bill at the fry, crippling several, which he chased and secured. The fish was very near the boat—so close that his barred sides and purple silver body shone with the greatest brilliancy in the translucent light of green sea water; for when feeding, the marlin's markings become exceptionally distinct. Truly a sight to thrill the heart of any fisherman!

Here and there a swirl in the water with a few crowding gulls above bespoke other swordfish, but evidently this school was not large and apparently the game was not as sizable as hoped. By this time the flying-fish bait was trolling astern and a strike was imminent.

Every nerve of the watching men was taut as a bow string, as they concentrated on birds, marlin and line; yet the angler's eyes watched more constantly the troll and the water behind and near it.

With one voice, both men shouted, "Look out! Here he comes!" For twenty feet behind the bait, a darting black fin with weaving sickle-tail rushed.

It was a moving picture of unparalleled brilliancy;

the contrast of the vibrant colors of the flashing fish were intensified by the reflecting background of living water. The marlin changed direction in his rush and, just before he reached the lure, he swerved to one side, as such fish nearly always do, and seizing his prey between his jaws, whirled, splashed a trifle, and, like a ray of light as he showed his gleaming underbody, turned downward and was away. The line from a free spool whizzed off the reel, thumbed as lightly as possible by the angler, for with the one hook used the marlin must be permitted to get the bait down, if this can be done.

It is the same scheme as giving free line to a bass taking a live frog, only the marlin is allowed much more line. The theory is to strike after the fish has turned the bait and swallowed it, and before he senses something wrong and ejects it below water, or throws it in a jump with shaking head. One danger of non-hooking is that the fish swallows the bait, then holds the leader in its bony jaws, enabling the angler to strike against the wire thus tightly held, while the hook farther down does not receive the force of the rod. Often leaders are found to be flattened as though by a vise when a fish is

not hooked, and the best technique is to give repeated sharp short strikes so that if the marlin holds and then releases the wire, one of the many efforts to set the barb will succeed.

In this case, the line rushed out for sixty odd feet, then slowed down as fish and launch stopped. The angler and his captain both knew, when it again started steadily off the reel, that the bait was swallowed. Setting the drag, the man waited till a tight line with a fish pulling it off the reel against the drag demanded that he strike. Again and again he struck until the marlin, feeling the strain, broke water in an arching leap, savagely wagging his head to throw the hook. He was not a big marlin, but he was away like lightning, making several frantic runs, turning and doubling. Truly, he would have been hard to handle on light tackle. The boat followed, aiding the rod in the necessity of keeping within reasonable distance, and of taking up slack; of following the frantic game in his headlong, slashing, hurtling battle for liberty. While the fight was fast and spectacular, this acrobat was not a large fish and the 16-ounce rod and heavy line quickly told on his stamina. His runs became shorter, yet

he struggled bravely, and to the end did all in his power to keep away from the boat.

The "Aerial," guided with skill, did as much to checkmate his efforts and his last hope to go under her as did the rod, and he was forced to take the gaff. In short order a rope was around his tail and he was fastened securely to a cleat on the after deck.

The time of the strike was just thirty minutes from the Club, or 9:30 o'clock, and the marlin was gaffed in forty-two minutes after the start. But both fishermen were disappointed. It was a small marlin of about one hundred and fifty pounds; no chance for a button.

The fish were still up, a few birds working. In no time a second flying-fish was dragging in the wake. A strike came quickly, but the combination failed and the marlin was unhooked, although he stole the bait. Perhaps it was the angler's fault, but on this occasion no line was taken against the drag.

A third bait did not remain untouched for long, and the third strike was a rush from the first; nothing but a wild dash to the lure, and away with it. However, he took line against a set drag, was safely hooked, and after a sharp, exciting struggle of twen-

ty-three minutes was resting beside the first. During this fight the bait had been forced up the line and carefully secured as it reached the rod tip, because flying-fish were scarce and even a mutilated one well worth saving.

The last fresh bait was put out and some surfacing fish were found. "Aerial" passed through quite a school of them, and eventually a quickly advancing dorsal gave ample notice of the coming strike. The fish was hooked and on the first jump showed he was a big fellow. Carefully they played the game. "Aerial" dashed after him hither and yon. The rod pumped when opportunity offered, yet this marlin was very strong and had a nasty way of rushing for the boat and going under or swerving at the last moment. Line was lost and recovered. The men worked fast. They had teamed together for so long that each knew the other's movements under certain conditions, and little was said. The marlin weakened slowly but he did weaken, and finally, after fifty-five minutes of hard fighting, was gaffed and placed with the others on the stern. Angler and boatman looked at each other and silently shook hands. Both realized that the quest for the five

buttons was over. Eight years of patience was rewarded. The last marlin was undoubtedly above two hundred pounds, though in no way a really large specimen. The two sat happily on the little raised seat of the canvassed bridge while the Hall-Scott responded to the throttle and "Aerial" heading south a half east, made for Avalon at her full speed of twenty miles. The birds still whirled, marlin still swirled, chasing the hapless bait, but neither angler nor boatman considered the taking of more fish. Their souls were filled with a great content.

At one o'clock they weighed in on the Tuna Club scales at Avalon two small marlin of something over one hundred and forty pounds apiece and a "button" fish of two hundred and twenty-six pounds, the identical weight of the disqualified marlin of 1921.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

## *TWO AT A TIME*

NOW and then the anglers heard stories of two marlin swordfish hooked at once. On one occasion they had witnessed two of the Avalon boatmen, Enos Vera and Parker Pence, fishing from the launch "Carrie," accomplish this feat, and both fish were landed. Never had they been fortunate enough to get two strikes simultaneously. It is a very difficult thing to land marlin so hooked. These fish are fast in the extreme, and if they take it into their minds to run in opposite directions, or if they cross lines, there is little chance of saving either. In such a situation the boatman generally endeavors to follow the larger fish, letting the more unfortunate angler do the best he can to hold his game. It is a ticklish operation.

One day in the latter part of September, "Aerial" was cruising about in the swordfish grounds off Long Beach. Several groups of marlin had been sighted and birds were working everywhere, but there had been no strikes. It was one of those days in which marlin revel, with a big swell running in

from the west and just enough breeze to riffle the surface of the water. Both anglers were sitting in the stern with rods in hand, their eyes glued on the water behind the baits, and their hopes high. Conditions seemed perfect for fishing.

Suddenly the skipper became alert. He stood erect in the canvassed bridge and gazed seaward. Then he turned to the anglers.

"Bring in your lines, there's a bunch of marlin working over there," he pointed.

Baits were swung inboard, and "Aerial" leaped forward under full power toward the school. Birds circled, wheeled, and swooped; splashes became visible as darting fins and backs rose into view; anglers and boatman thrilled in anticipation.

When the school was reached, Farnsworth cut the throttle and "Aerial" resumed her trolling speed. Lines were let out and all watched the fish. Marlin were everywhere, scattering bait and cutting the water with fins and tails. Several jumped clear of the surface, their white stripes showing clearly against bluish purple backs as they chased their food. They were more brilliantly marked than usual. Terrified patches of bait skittered across the water

endeavoring to elude their pursuers who slashed relentlessly.

A fin appeared behind the boat and followed the lures. Which one would he take? The anglers sat tensed.

"Strike!" yelled the older man.

"Strike!" yelled the other. "I've got one, too!"

"Take it easy," cautioned Farnsworth. "Let's see if we can't save both fish."

The first swordfish took the bait with a rush and quickly was hooked, but his companion seemed finicky, dropping the lure several times before making off with it. The second man was so engrossed in his efforts to secure the strike that he failed to notice the remarks and excited comments from boatman and angler concerning the other fish. At last he threw on the drag, and, putting all the force which he dared against the straining rod, drove the barb into the quarry's jaw. Up came the marlin—a small fish of perhaps 150 pounds. He made three graceful, arching leaps and settled down to steady fighting. As yet this rodman had given no thought to his partner, who was using light tackle. He had heard several exclamations on the size of the other's

fish, but had been too busy with his own to pay much attention.

"How are you making out? Hook him all right?" he asked, turning for a moment from his task.

"I've hooked the biggest marlin in the world on light tackle; give me every bit of room you can, 'cause this fish'll break all records!"

"Look at him jump!" called Farnsworth, although there was no need, for they already were looking.

It was, indeed, a huge fish, the largest that either angler ever had hooked, and the greatest skill was required to hold it on such slender tackle. Several times the lines became crossed as the game ran in different directions, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the anglers, by passing one rod under the other, were able to keep things clear and avoid a tangle. The boatman held "Aerial's" bow on the big fish, which now ran ahead, while the smaller one on the heavy outfit swam at right angles to the course of the boat; but fortunately this one turned, and the man with the larger line was able first to hold him and then to force him near the launch.

By Courtesy of Mack Sennett

A LEAPING MARLIN

Copyrighted by Mark Sullivan

AN ALLISON TUNA TAKING THE BAIT

"How's that for horsing him?" he bragged, but the others were paying no attention.

Eventually he was able to lead this marlin close enough to see the leader and, holding him with all his strength while the launch forged ahead in pursuit of the larger game, he called for the gaff. First to his anger and then to his consternation, neither of his companions paid the slightest attention either to him or to his swordfish. Then he demanded that his fish be gaffed, as he realized that he could not hold it much longer.

"Haven't time!" said the skipper.

"What am I supposed to do; yank him into the boat by myself?"

No answer from his captain caused him to turn; close ahead, on the starboard bow and near the surface, with his huge sickle high above the water, swam the big light-tackle marlin. Apparently Farnsworth was trying to force the fish to turn to the right by keeping close to him. What could these tactics mean? Then as he cast his eyes to port, the whole situation became clear; there, near at hand, were two navy tugs, each having in tow targets for battleship gunnery practice. These targets stretched

back for a full half mile behind the tugs. He sensed that it was absolutely necessary to force the big marlin past the bows of the tugs into the clear water beyond, because it was impossible to turn him on the slender rod and line so that the vessels and tows could pass in front. As "Aerial" leaped forward to head off a quick run of the large marlin, the younger angler exerted all his strength to hold his smaller one, and with a straight pull from rod to fish, with line clear of the water, something had to go. The weakest link appeared to be the way in which the marlin was hooked, the steel tore loose and the prize escaped.

"There goes my fish, and it's not my fault. No one can do more than bring 'em to gaff and hold them there for ten minutes; you're a fine pair, and I consider that I caught that marlin.

However, he realized very fully that his friends had done the only possible thing under the circumstances, and that a small swordfish on heavy tackle is nothing when compared to a large one on "light." As the situation developed, he saw that the chance of saving the big marlin was becoming very slim. The fish was following the southeasterly course that

all marlin took in their migration, and while afraid of the boat, it was doubtful if he could be forced away from the tugs. In the meantime, "Aerial" was blowing her whistle at these vessels, and her skipper motioning them to slow down, but those in command did not seem to understand the situation, and held their course. The tugs were coming nearer, but the launch and marlin still had a leeway of safety, provided they could keep the same course and speed.

After what seemed an eternity, the launch passed in front of the first tug. With every second that they continued to advance, the prospect of getting by the other vessel became brighter and their spirits rose. The margin was, nevertheless, very scant. Then the fish turned slightly toward the left, and it was all too evident that it could not clear. Farnsworth, in a final desperate effort, ran still closer to the quarry to try to edge it to the right and away from the danger. The tug whistled shrilly as it bore down upon "Aerial" and Farnsworth was forced to yield right of way. Whether the fish saw the approach of the larger vessel, or whether it became frightened at the nearness of the fishing launch is a matter of

conjecture: in any event it suddenly turned short, and with incredible rapidity dove under the boat. Although the rodman did his best to clear the line by plunging his tip well below water, the nine thread caught on some part of "Aerial's" underbody and was severed.

"He's gone!" said the angler.

Words cannot console at such times, so it was with quietness that the three men set their course for Avalon.

PARGO, ALSO CALLED RED SNAPPER—NEOMAENIS NOVEMFASCIATUS

*Description:* This typical member of bass family may be identified without difficulty by prominent projecting teeth which give it a fierce appearance. Of a dark reddish hue, which lightens toward under side. Head large, as is the mouth, and forehead slopes quickly toward snout. Nine spines in first dorsal fin. End of tail is concave, and is bass-like in structure.

*Distribution:* Taken at Ceralbo Island. Banderas Bay, Mazatlan and other places along coast. Evidently indigenous to these waters throughout year.

*Habits:* Habits of this fish are much the same as others of bass family. Does not school, but lives in rocky holes and crevices, feeding on small fry.

*Capture:* May be taken on practically any sort of lure, and is remarkably game on light tackle. Its flesh is of mediocre food value.

RED SNAPPER—NEOMAENIS ARATUS

*Description:* The red snapper reaches a length of at least two feet and is of a brick red color, darker on ventral side with lighter underbody. Fins are small and tail deeply notched. Black moustache-like line on upper jaw. Whole side of fish between gill coverings and tail covered with dark lines which run parallel to outline of body. Covered with large scales which also are present on the fins.

*Distribution:* Found from the Pacific Coast to tropical America.

*Habits:* Habits resemble cabrilla and bass. Lives along rocky shores.

*Capture:* It will strike on any medium-sized trolled artificial lure, and gives a nice fight on light tackle.

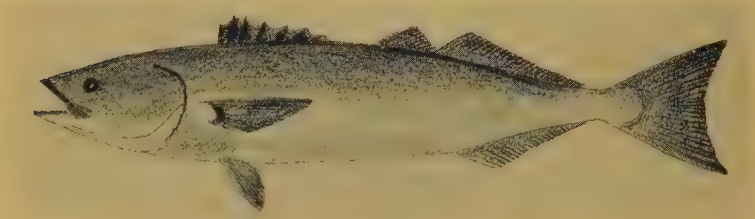
WHITE SEA BASS—TOTUAVA—CYNOSCIEN MACDONALDI

*Description:* This bass is somewhat like weakfish of the Atlantic, and grows to tremendous size in southern waters. Light bronze color on back, with lighter shades on underbody. Scales are rather large. Pronounced hump on dorsal side where fin joins body. Tail projects out toward middle, being convexed from lobes.

*Distribution:* Found from California to the cape in Gulf of California, especially upper part.

*Habits:* Swims in schools, running into shallow bays in search of food. Its habits may be found elsewhere in this book.

*Capture:* Fully described in a preceding chapter.



CORVINA—CYNOSCEIN RETICULATUS

*Description:* This specimen is thought to be the corvina, although latter does not show three dorsal fins as does the fish here pictured. It is possible that soft dorsal of this individual became torn and grew into two fins. The corvina greatly resembles the white sea bass (Cynoscien macdonaldi) in coloring and shape save that it is slightly slimmer, and does not have humped back of latter. Head is smaller and tail lunate. But one specimen was taken by the "Radio" and weighed twenty-five pounds.

*Distribution:* Found from the Pacific Coast to tropical America.

*Habits:* Much like those of white sea bass.

*Capture:* Taken on trolled Wilson spoon at San Carlos Bay, and put up fine fight on light tackle.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

## *THE GREEN BUTTON AND WORLD'S RECORD THREE-SIX MARLIN*

THE Green Button, awarded for the taking of any marlin of over one hundred pounds on light tackle, generally is supposed to be the most difficult of all to secure. Undoubtedly, in average years, this is the case if one leaves out the stunt of catching three-six marlin or light tackle broadbill. In any event, at the close of 1929, the Tuna Club awards in point of number of the original five buttons won ran in this wise: Blue Button, 159; Gold Button, 75; Red Button, 45; White Button, 33, and Green Button, 17. This would seem to bear out the contention that heavy tackle is too heavy and light tackle too light for the average run of fish.

However, in 1929, during the great marlin run, it was easier to get a one hundred pound fish on "light" than a two-hundred pounder on "heavy," because of the scarcity of two hundred pound specimens, while very large ones were extremely rare.

One of our anglers used nothing but light tackle until successful, took the second fish hooked, and

thereafter killed two additional fish on "light." The fish captured for his button was a medium-sized one of one hundred and sixty-five pounds. It was hooked foul, the steel being imbedded above the head and about half-way between the eyes and the dorsal. It made a hard fight of two hours and fifty-five minutes, but did not tangle, and was well beaten without being entirely exhausted when gaffed. Another fish was killed in forty-eight minutes, and the third, which swallowed the bait, was accounted for only after a very fast and hard struggle of three hours and ten minutes, which goes to prove that light-tackle marlin vary considerably.

On nine-thread the marlin is faster over a longer period than on heavy, and many times lines are broken and more fish missed because the smaller outfit makes it impossible to use sufficient force in hooking.

The greatest danger is when after a dive of several hundred feet the swordfish turns, ascends and makes his frantic jumps against the belly of the submerged line. Should this occur at the commencement of a fight when the acrobat is untired and of great rapidity of movement, the line pops. The way

to prevent such a happening is to have a fast boat which continually keeps just alongside the top of the belly of a line. A submerged line will run south, for example, while the fish, after forcing downward and then travelling south well under water, comes up and turns north. Often one sees a boat backing towards the line with the marlin ahead and going away in wild leaps and headlong rushes in the opposite direction.

The belly on the surface over a submerged line has the water as a cushion and may be fought hard with little danger of breaking. Rather, it is most necessary to fear for the rod. A straight pull from rod to fish gives small strain to the rod, but the little line under such conditions breaks with astounding ease.

Light tackle success means a careful, skilful, patient fight, with just about so much strain on rod and so much, and no more, on the line.

Except on the first run of very large tuna or broadbill, heavy tackle seldom breaks; both line and rod stand almost anything except backlashes near the boat. Add to this the fact that with light tackle and rod in belt-socket it is more difficult to apply the

right degree of force, and that unless properly applied line or rod is broken, and the extra skill required is evident.

The year 1917 supplied the first recorded victory of angler over marlin on "light." Including the year 1929, but seventeen fishermen have accomplished this feat.

Between 1914 and 1916 a woman fishing for yellowtail near Clemente kelp on the north shore killed a marlin on light tackle, to the great astonishment of some noted Tuna Club anglers camped on the Island, but the feat is not registered.

Coxe, Jump, Adams, Bandini and Coleman were the first men to take light-tackle marlin, after whom came Mankowski, one of the very best of light-tackle experts, while Doty, Pillsbury, Wm. de Mille and Yule secured fish around two hundred pounds, and Spalding, Streeter, Brode and the Thomases (father and son) are other Green Button winners.

Unlike the broadbill fishing, most men who are fortunate and kill light-tackle marlin continue at the sport and prefer it to the use of heavy tackle angling for the same fish, unless big ones are seen or very few prizes are to be found.

It would seem that "three-six" for marlin should be considered in connection with light tackle and the differences explained. The tackle specifications show that light tackle requires a six-ounce tip, the butt being of unrestricted weight, whereas "three-six" constitutes a rod, the total weight of which is not to exceed six ounces. "Light" demands a length over all of six feet, and "three-six" carries the same length specifications over all, but its butt is confined to twelve inches as against fourteen inches of butt for "light," so that the three-six rod has considerably less backbone, as well as less weight. The 9-thread line of "light" breaks at not over twenty-six pounds, while the 6-thread of "three-six" snaps at sixteen pounds dead weight.

After the father and son had each been awarded the five Tuna Club buttons they considered the possibility of landing a three-six marlin. A conference on the schooner "Radio" resulted in Farnsworth and the father taking the ground that this could be done; but the son, a much stronger heavy-tackle rodsman than his parent, contended that the other two were wrong. There was much to substantiate his position, and from his association not only with Farnsworth

but also with other anglers and boatmen he had secured ample experience to make his opinion valuable. Mankowski had taken several sailfish in Florida on Tuna Club "three-six," and an eastern angler had killed a small seventy-pound marlin, but these were about half the weight of California small marlin. Further, a number of men had tried and failed on Catalina three-six marlin, and it was more or less of an unknown equation.

The "Aerial" was a launch designed and built for light-tackle work. She was one of the very best in the fleet, not only because of her special construction and short length, but also on account of the arrangement of an extra cockpit for gaffer and her engine with direct reverse, the latter giving extreme ease in backing, turning and steering. Add to this Farnsworth's known ability in anticipating and gauging a fish's movements, and his extraordinary skill as a gaffer, and some of the confidence of the older angler is understood.

Every preparation and safeguard that could be thought of was carried out, and the campaign was started with the knowledge that two skilful fishermen had announced they were in the field for three-

THE THREE-SIX MARLIN
A World's Record

A GREEN BUTTON MARLIN. WEIGHT 163 LBS.
Taken by George C. Thomas, 3rd.

A MORNING'S CATCH OF MARLIN AT CATALINA ISLAND

six marlin and that others might attempt the proposition. First, leather was used to attach the line to leader, but eventually a soft piece of linen was believed better, and in no case was double line utilized, the single line being tied to leader swivel or ring.

In all, four marlin were hooked out of five strikes on "three-six," which was owing to the fact that four fish took the bait exceedingly well. The first specimen attached gave a fight of twenty-five minutes, at the end of which time the marlin became unhooked and escaped, apparently without injury. The second fish was too fast for the inexperience of the angler, who did not yet realize that the secret of success in holding the fish during the first frantic moments depended on working with all possible power on the belly of the line. This second fish dove to a considerable depth, doubled back after a rapid ascent to the surface, then broke the 6-thread as in his fear and furious leaps he jumped against the friction which held the belly of the little line.

At a gloomy conference that night it was decided to fight the line-belly to the utmost and try thereby to avoid the danger of jumps and runs against it.

The third fish was as fast as the second, but the new strategy enabled the angler to avoid line breaking, and at the end of an hour it was felt that the fear of losing the marlin during the time of his greatest speed was over. However, the fish tired very slowly, continuing to jump hysterically at the end of two hours, and the angler, exposed to a rough sea with lessening chances of success as the swordfish worked well out from under Catalina's lee, commenced to force his antagonist to the utmost.

This method had been successful on a good-sized hammerhead of about two hundred pounds caught the preceding day on "three-six" after a fight of forty odd minutes, during which it had been possible to test the tackle to its limit and try to orient the force which safely could be applied without breaking. Incidentally, the killing of this big shark on "three-six" emphasized the fact that while a fair fighter and the best warrior of his family on the west coast, this hammerhead was subdued and led exhausted to the gaff in much less than an hour, whereas, marlin were untamable to the same extent after a much longer period of harder battling.

At the end of two hours and thirty-five minutes

the third three-six marlin was becoming tired and once or twice rolled on his side in the heavy breaking westerly swells. The angler scented victory, and although he had practiced a straight strain on light lines by experimenting with swimmers in preparation for this very situation, he made the serious error of applying too much force on an almost straight pull above water from rod to fish, and poof! the little 6-thread popped and the third marlin was lost.

This third fight proved that, given reasonable conditions of weather and average action of marlin, a three-six marlin victory was practicable; but to be on the safe side a long fight of at least four hours was to be expected. For this reason, "three-six" was never tried except in the first two hours of the early morning fishing, and it was several days after the third defeat before the fourth fish was hooked on "three-six."

On this occasion, after breakfast at 6:30, the "Aerial" leaving "Radio's" side at 7:15 was the first boat along the Pebbly Beach shore, passing on the way out the beautiful schooner "Goodwill" from which the owner, Keith Spalding, and his wife, waved salutations. Mrs. Spalding is perhaps the

most expert woman angler in the world for big game fish, having, among many other noteworthy achievements, taken broadbill and large light-tackle tuna, something no other fair angler has accomplished.

The water was smooth under the lee of Seal Rocks. Every condition favored, when at exactly 7:30 A.M. a marlin rushed the bait, struck, and was well hooked. He jumped beautifully, and angler and boatman were in rapture over his leaps and quick, changing rushes. At 7:45, Max Fleischman, of Santa Barbara, with his boatman, Ray Millsap, passed near and for a time watched the progress of the three-six fight, as they could see from the marlin's actions and the bend of the little rod what was happening. McKay, with his angler, and Parker Pence both saw the commencement of the chase.

The two men were glad that others noted their quarry jumping fast and free without entanglement.

The first hour and the second flew by, teaming and fast work aiding the fishermen to baffle tactics of an opponent which sounded swiftly and to great depth, ascended rapidly to the surface and threw himself well clear of the water in frenzied gyrations.

By 10:30 "Aerial" had followed her game over six miles off shore, and although not yet experiencing rough water, was beyond smooth going. About this time, the angler's son, who acted as boatman that morning for Colonel Tisdale and had gaffed that enthusiast's first swordfish, appeared with "Radio's" small launch, proudly displaying a marlin flag. For a time he hovered near, but was careful to give the fast-moving three-six marlin plenty of sea room.

Time wore on. The number of jumps was counted aloud by Farnsworth. Otherwise, little was said, and every energy was bent on fighting the fish as hard as possible, avoiding his frequent charges, and at such times as he ran under the boat passing the line with safety by plunging the rod tip well below water, with very light reel drag, while swerving the "Aerial's" stern away from the fish.

Gradually the battle worked further off shore. Slowly the fresh westerly kicked up a rising sea. Very, very imperceptibly the speed of the hunted diminished. Dives followed after a series of surface rushes and jumps, but the fray was always on the move—no sulking—no very tedious pumping, but

a continued watch to checkmate efforts apparently aimed with understanding and cunning, to jump against a buried line and part it.

Time ceased to be considered. Noon passed. The sea grew worse. The little "Aerial" was tumbling and bucking—spray was flying. Yet, always the boatman anticipated the fish's movements, while the tired angler labored again and again to recover line, to avoid slack—to reel—to reel—to reel. One, two and three o'clock passed. It was never ending—thought of victory was far away. Head, back, arms, hands and fingers ached. Instinct and stubbornness alone held the rodsman at his task.

At three-thirty, after eight hours, the fish sometimes was jumping clear but his leaps were much shorter, and occasionally he could not raise his weakening body above the crests. After a series of rushes he appeared still more tired, and the angler forced the swivel at the end of the leader almost to the boatman's hand. Then the marlin apparently sensed its danger and, with a desperate plunge, for the eighth time, went under the boat, from fairly close quarters, necessitating quickness in handling of line, rod and launch to avoid disaster.

On this dive the victim went down between seven hundred and eight hundred feet. Fear was expressed that if he died there, it would be impossible to bring him to the surface.

Every effort was made to force him into action, especially to raise him, because with the line leading downward close to the boat, the strain on the rod was dangerous. Furthermore he gained rest when swimming slowly at depth.

This greyhound's natural disposition for speed, as well as the constant rod pressure, evidently caused him to come up again. He appeared near the breaking combers one hundred feet away and gallantly tried to escape by a slow but varied run, during which his ineffectual efforts to leap forward showed his increasing exhaustion.

Both men realized that now was the time for a supreme effort. It was close to 4:30 P.M. The fight had lasted nearly nine hours. If the swordfish dove again, he might not be forced up before death or till darkness was falling, and in a night fight with very rough water, as now experienced, hope of success would wane.

As much pressure as was dared was applied, and

three times the swivel was almost to the gaffer's anxious hand, but on each happening the marlin, summoning his diminishing power, managed to run off a few feet of line. He was, however, too weak to dive again, and not fast enough to go under the boat.

Another very careful, watchfully patient application of all the force possible without risking a break, and the swivel drew near again—the leader reached Farnsworth's anxious hands. The fish was turned on his side. The gaff flashed and the marlin was held. But, awakened to maniacal fear and stung by cold steel, he thrashed furiously.

The fisherman knew the straight gaff might tear out and the prize escape. By pre-arranged plan, he placed his rod with light reel-drag in its holder so that if the marlin broke free he could take line on a run. Jumping forward into the gaffing cockpit, the weary man hastily seized the detachable gaff, and leaning well over the boat's side, plunged this weapon through the fish from below upward, took a turn of the attached gaff rope around a cleat, and allowed his boatman to secure another hold with

the small gaff, this time downward through the fish's head.

The battle was over and fish gaffed at 4:35—nine hours and five minutes after hooking; yet it was not until they had a rope around his tail and another around his bill, and had him tied to the ring bolt of the after deck, that the men felt safe. The "Aerial" was slightly over twenty-three miles off the east end where she had hooked on.

During the home trip, as the sturdy launch lurched and bounded through a rough, breaking sea with spray flying over them in clouds, the exhausted angler rested under the canvas hood, while the captain guided his craft. It was a new record after a fight which both men felt was one of the most exciting they had experienced, and with a game, valiant, swift and cunning foe which, to the very last, fought with every ounce of his strength, energy and wile.

A three-six marlin is a stunt; it is not adaptable to general angling. The average boat is too slow to attempt the work, and except when many fish are present and with a boatman of great skill and an

angler of patience and experience, it would be a wasteful attempt.

The argument that many fish are broken off and die does not carry conviction. In this trial, four fish were fast. One escaped "scot free," two broke off with leader attached, but these fish did not necessarily die. Leaders rust and hooks are known to become surrounded by growth. In the case of heavy tackle, the same angler had four strikes one day. One fish got away clear, three were killed. Marlin perhaps would prefer to have an opportunity to live, even with a leader attached, than be killed outright Heavy tackle kills many fish to "three-six's" one fish. Sportsmen have taken many marlin in one day on "heavy."

A three-six marlin affords the superlative in thrill and excitement, yet to take it is a stunt. It is a question whether this or the light tackle broadbill should be awarded general club buttons.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

## *GIANT BASS*

THIS member of the bass family is sometimes confused with the jewfish, which it closely resembles, although "Stereolepis gigas" is believed to be a more gamey and stronger fighter than the latter. In any event, the fish grows to a great size in Southern California waters, and though the Tuna Club record established by N. A. Howard in 1916 is four hundred and ninety-three pounds, the Club does not award a membership button for its taking. Nevertheless the giant bass is well worthy of capture on its own account, without considering medals and awards offered by the Tuna and Light tackle organizations.

Before the time of live-bait boats, these bass were much more numerous. In the old days a number of Avalon anglers sometimes concentrated for its capture, the result generally being the taking of several fine specimens. Of late years, numbers of skilful fishermen try for big bass with light tackle and claim that this form of sport produces a splendid contest. The Tuna Club light tackle record is two hun-

dred and eighty-two pounds, and for several years the outstanding specimen usually exceeded two hundred pounds.

Nevertheless, this prey cannot be placed on the same plane as the tuna and swordfish, for still fishing with bait is the usual procedure. Yet, when tuna are scarce and marlin have not arrived, this adventure is attractive.

In the late summer of 1921, an angler was trolling for marlin near Clemente. Conditions were exceptionally propitious, but although the whole north shore carefully had been worked with a flying-fish bait, no strike had resulted and no sickles were seen.

In the early afternoon the lee was still fairly quiet, notwithstanding that the horizon to the west showed the broken and moving lines which denoted wind off shore. "Gray Gull" after circling the reef at the east end without result, tried the old "Glory Hole" just west, the occupants of the launch hoping that this famous spot migh yield a strike; but nothing resulted. Skirting the kelp, our angler put out a spoon on light tackle, trusting for a chance at yellowtail, or even kelp bass, to relieve the monotony, for he had trolled many hours without a strike.

NELSON HOWARD'S GIANT BASS

The camp of George Michaelis, made famous in angling history by Holder and Governor Pinchot, lay further west, and as "Gray Gull" approached it Michaelis was seen rowing out in a small skiff to hail the fishermen. The angler took in the spoon on light, but allowed his flying-fish bait attached to the 24-thread to sink, and while awaiting the arrival of Michaelis, noted his camp with interest.

In the past, many marlin had been taken by Clemente's shores, and yellowtail had been abundant, but the fact that fish had been slaughtered in great quantity by net-boats, coupled with the live-bait industry, had changed the old angler's paradise. Yellowtail were practically eliminated. Tuna were very scarce, and when schools did appear the round haul net-boats not only decimated and frightened them but made it difficult for rods to work them.

Truly, Clemente was almost barren and the lack of ocean life on this occasion was directly traceable to the fact that there was no law to stop commercial fishing near it—absolutely no restriction of any kind. Sometimes fifty round hauls with their fish-exterminating equipment appeared here when

tuna schooled. Nearly always, various types of commercial boats ranged the waters because live-bait boats could without difficulty attract fish, where trolling gave no results.

This sad condition was forced strongly upon the angler's notice as he waved a greeting to the party which occupied the camp at this time.

In fishing, it is the unexpected that often happens. Came a slight rap at the bait. Subconsciously, the angler gave line from his free spool, for he had been trying for marlin. Instinct caused him to act as he would have done had a swordfish tapped.

The line ran fast, and as the man put on a very light drag, the fish continued to take it in spite of the resistance. Something had the bait and it was time to strike. The rod moved upward in a fast, hard sweep which was repeated. The line came taut and then rushed away against the heavy drag now applied. It was a hard, forceful run, rather than one of extreme speed, but it took off over two hundred feet from the reel. The angler pumped when the fish slowed, turned his quarry, and as he continued "pumping" gradually recovered the line.

Some people who have never used the method of

"pumping" a big fish, may think this is an easy matter, needing nothing but brute strength. When they try it, they find that it is difficult and necessitates practice and skill. Some of them usually discover they are not in sufficiently good physical condition to be able to handle the situation.

On this occasion, the fish was brought within perhaps fifty feet of the boat, when Farnsworth, who had already announced that it was a big bass, laughed heartily as the victim on seeing the boat rushed off again. This was much to the discomfiture of the man at the rod. Several times this occurred, the angler gaining line by hard work until his captive came near the danger, when away it rushed and the battle re-commenced. However, each time the outward run was shorter until at last the fish was brought near, and having given his all, lay on his side and was gaffed.

Both men were surprised at the size of their capture. It took the help of the huge Michaelis to get the giant bass aboard the launch. Farnsworth secured it carefully, and after looking at it thoughtfully, remarked, "Not the record, but a fairly big fish—it should win this year's first prize."

Michaelis gravely concurred, and then these two old-timers who had seen Clemente in its glory spoke of other days—of the wonderful fishing gone forever—of the present situation with its lack of yellowtail and of the fast disappearing tuna. Both felt that the marlin were safe from commercialism for a while, but that eventually, when the other fish were annihilated, the marlin also would meet their doom.

It was time to start for home, close to forty miles away across a rough channel. "Gray Gull" headed for Avalon. It took her four hours to make the trip, during which the big bass was kept wet with the flying spray, as the launch jumped and rolled through the breaking chop caused by a heavy westerly. When weighed the catch showed just three hundred and sixty pounds—not in any way a record, but the largest of its kind registered by the Tuna Club since that date, and the high fish of 1921.

The Clemente trip gave food for much thought. It proved, even in 1921, that fishing was on the wane; that unless wise laws were enacted to protect this type of California's ocean wealth, it would disappear. The nine years since the day noted, have proved the fear to be real. Fishing has decreased; Clemente

is more barren than ever; angling in the entire Southern California district has gone from bad to worse.

It is not a case of saving the fish for the sportsman. It is not a matter of allowing anglers to kill fish and to keep everyone else from securing such food. It is clear that unless commercial slaughter is controlled, soon there will be no fish for *anyone.* Broadbill swordfish at $1.00 per pound sold in high-priced cafés does not supply the average citizen with this delicacy. Rather, it caters to a class of people who can afford to pay a high price for a rare food.

All anglers have killed a total of less than a hundred broadbill swordfish in over fifteen years, which is a negligible factor. Harpoon boats capture many hundreds annually. Broadbill, to be saved, must be put on the closed list of commercial fishing, and the capture by anglers restricted to a small number each season per man.

Tuna can stand a certain amount of netting. This fish supplies a staple food for the masses. Commercial tuna fishing should be severely restricted, not entirely eliminated. Careful consideration should be applied to the conservation of all fish. Certain kinds need drastic protection; others require reasonable

conservation. So far, there are no hatcheries to augment the supply of tuna, broadbill, marlin, yellowtail, etc. It is doubtful if artificial propagation of such kinds ever will be successful.

On the other hand, kelp bass and possibly some other fish indigenous to our coast should present no great difficulty to hatcheries. The whole subject is one for most careful study and investigation. No one interest of any industry or class should control the situation. It is a question of safeguarding a great natural wealth for the future. Unless some active measures quickly are established there will be no chance to save the Southern California supply of ocean food and game fish.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# *YELLOWTAIL, WHITE SEA BASS AND OTHERS*

BIG game fishing in the Pacific generally refers to the capture of tuna and swordfish, but there is a multitude of smaller fry which bring delight to the angler in Southern California waters. For those who have not the time or patience to roam the seas day after day in search of the larger game, the waters of the Channel Islands offer a veritable mecca, and a variety of small and medium-sized fighters usually are to be found within a short distance of the town of Avalon.

The best known and perhaps the gamest of the smaller fishes which inhabit the waters of the southland is the yellowtail. It was this swift fighter which first brought anglers to the shores of Catalina. Unfortunately, the yellowtail is not as plentiful here as it was in years gone by, but some seasons find him back in numbers sufficient to arouse the interest of sportsmen. The yellowtail is for the most part an inshore fish, migrating in schools which hug the coast in the spring of the year, and stay in scattered

groups throughout the greater part of the summer. They vary in weight from about 15 pounds up to 61 pounds, which is the Tuna Club record. During the past few years the average weight of these fish has been low, seldom running above 20 pounds. The yellowtail is one of the bravest fighters found in any waters, and those who have caught him can well be proud of their achievement. He is a true member of the mackerel family, having the distinguishing sickle tail and a greenish white color. The fins are of a vivid golden hue, which give him his name.

Yellowtail may be taken with live bait from anchored boats and barges, but those who desire the greatest sport hunt him by trolling along the kelp which fringes the coasts. The common bait used for his capture is an artificial spoon or spinner, the Wilson spoon being considered the finest lure. But he bites well on cut bait or even on flying-fish. Often small sea sleds are used with the rod, in much the same way as the kite is employed for tuna. These sleds are tied to the masthead of the fishing boat by a line perhaps a hundred feet in length. They ride the water at an angle, paralleling the boat. The fish-

A BRACE OF FIGHTING YELLOWTAIL FROM TIBURON

THE TYPE OF RUNNER NAMED "RAINBOW-YELLOWTAIL"
BY THE AUTHORS

ing line is fastened to this guiding rope a little over half way out, thus bringing the lure beyond the wake of the launch.

Yellowtail generally are taken on light tackle, that is a six ounce tip with nine thread line, but many of our more skilful anglers prefer the "three-six" outfit for his capture. When hooked, this fish makes a plugging, determined fight for his freedom, striving to reach the kelp and thus to part the line. He seldom breaks water except on the strike, but gives a series of fast near-surface runs, which become shorter toward the end of the fight.

In the early part of the summer, when this fish first has arrived in these waters and while he still is in the schooling stage, there are times when he cannot be induced to take a trolled lure. Many anglers have been successful in his capture by stopping the launch in the near vicinity of the school and casting out the line with a live sardine or anchovy attached to the hook. Sometimes transparent gut leaders of heavy size are used to great advantage in this method of fishing.

Another of the medium sized fighters which brings joy to the hearts of anglers is the white sea-

bass. This fish, as the name would indicate, is a member of the bass family, with much the same habits and idiosyncracies as the yellowtail. He, too, is found along the kelp beds close to the shore and thrives on small fry, being caught with much success on the previously mentioned Wilson spoon and other lures. In size he approximates the yellowtail. He puts up a good fight, and is fished for in the same way. The Tuna Club record for the white sea-bass is 60 pounds, but the average fish taken off California coasts is much smaller than this.

Among small offshore game, perhaps the albacore is the best known. One of the tuna family, this mackerel gives a great battle, and affords fine practice for those who desire to learn the art of taking larger game. Running in immense schools, and with almost no fear of a boat, he may be captured by the merest novice with little danger of loss, as he has no kelp to run for, and is not too tricky in his fighting tactics. His flesh is considered fine eating and for this reason he is constantly sought by commercial fishermen. No albacore have been taken for several years.

Fortunately he is too fast for net-boats, and thus

escapes slaughter at their hands. He will attack almost any lure which is trolled through the school, but seems to prefer the feather jig or the bone jig. These baits should be trolled fast, and when a school is once found many fish may be had from it.

Albacore resemble the blue finned tuna to a great degree, having much the same shape and coloring. They are somewhat chunkier than the tunas, however, and have extremely long pectoral fins. For this reason they frequently are referred to as the long finned tuna. There is a story of a yellow finned albacore being killed near Avalon, but unfortunately the specimen was not saved and preserved.

In the season of 1929, a comparative stranger visited the waters of the Southland. The newcomer was the dolphin. Toward the middle of August this beautifully colored fighter arrived at the Channel Islands, and brought fine sport to those who hunted him. He is an offshore fish, often found under floating patches of kelp and usually ready to take a bait. One of the fastest fish that swims, his arrival was regarded with considerable surprise by those of the angling fraternity, for it is seldom indeed that he favors us with a visit. His coming is explained by

fishermen as being due to warm ocean currents which reached our shores. Those who were fortunate enough to capture him sincerely hope that he will become a steady visitor. The dolphin puts up one of the fastest leaping fights imaginable, showing terrific bursts of speed in his surface runs. He may bite at almost any kind of artificial bait, but prefers those which are trolled at a rate of about six or seven miles an hour. He hits them with a rush. Due to his extreme speed and agility he is one of the most difficult fish to gaff, as the following experience of the writer would indicate.

The "Aerial," with angler aboard, had been scouting the sea for signs of broadbill. Many floating patches of kelp were noticed as they drifted along, and when the angler happened to look under one of these closely meshed masses he believed he discerned flashes of blue. He immediately thought of dolphin, and, as he had never been fortunate enough to capture one of these prizes, he suggested to Farnsworth that they troll a feather jig past the kelp to try to raise one of them. The boatman agreed, and the line was put out.

Sure enough, the lure had no more than started

ROOSTER-FISH—NEMATISTIUS PECTORALIS

*Description:* The rooster-fish immediately may be identified by long, comb-like spines or trailers which form dorsal fin. Silvery in color, which goes into greenish blue on back. In many specimens there will be found an almost black line extending from gill covering back. This stripe or band is very wide, and arches up abruptly toward top just above pectoral fin. Pectoral fin is almost transparent, and has black spot at base. Tail is forked and typically mackerel.

*Distribution:* Cape San Lucas and tropical waters are the home of this fish, which seems to prefer water close to shore with a sandy bottom.

*Habits:* It schools like all members of its family.

*Capture:* Light tackle is best because it will not prevent the flashing speed and jumping ability which makes him so popular with anglers. One of the gamest fighters which the writers ever have taken, and approaches the dolphin in speed and beauty.

DOLPHIN—COLYPHAENA HIPPURUS

*Description:* The dolphin long has been known as one of the most beautiful fish of the sea, and the changes in color which it undergoes when landed never will cease to amaze anglers. Ventral side is apple green which runs into brilliant golden shade toward belly. Whole fish covered with emerald green or light blue spots. Dorsal fin has purplish hue and other fins are golden yellow. This fish fades and colors brilliantly; sometimes it will take on an almost white sheen, which goes into pale yellow, then gold, then blue; it cannot be adequately described. Dolphin approaching fifty pounds or more in weight have been landed, but average weight is far smaller than this.

*Habits:* Fully described elsewhere in the book.

*Distribution:* Found in all tropical and semi-tropical waters.

*Capture:* Manner of capturing the dolphin may be found in a preceding chapter.

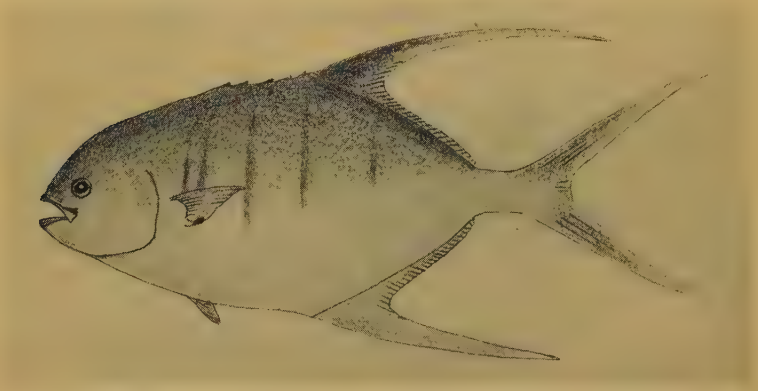
CREVALLE—CARANX HIPPOS

*Description:* Light greenish color on back with almost white underbody. In some localities colors vary and often are much darker. Pectoral and soft dorsal and anal fins unusually long, being light green and almost transparent. Tail is typically mackerel.

*Distribution:* Found at Cape San Lucas, and further south along coast to Banderas Bay, where it inhabits rocky shores and deep water close in. Generally, is an inshore fish which does not seem to school, but infests certain localities in great numbers.

*Habits:* Little is known of the habits of the crevalle.

*Capture:* This fish varies in size from fifteen to twenty-five pounds. May be taken on light tackle or three-six, and will strike on practicaliy any small spoon or lure.



ANGEL FISH, PAMPANITO—TRACHINOTIS RHODOPUS

*Description:* One of the most beautifully colored of all tropical fish. Light iridescent shades which vary from pastel pink on back to silver pearl on underbody. Four streaks running vertically through sides behind gill coverings. Dorsal spines are five in number and are very short, but second dorsal and anal fins greatly elongated and extend almost to tip of tail which also is long and forked. Ventral and pectoral fins small, and there is spot of black on base of latter. The body oval in shape.

*Distribution:* Found in tropical seas, from Cape San Lucas southward to Panama.

*Habits:* It seems to prefer sandy bottoms.

*Capture:* May be taken on cut bait on a small hook.

to circle the floating island when there was a terrific strike, and a gleaming, flashing blaze of color hurled itself shimmering into the air. In a few short minutes the quarry was brought to gaff, the first dolphin that the angler had ever hooked.

"Don't miss him, George, I want to have him mounted," said the angler, as with perfect confidence he brought the leader to the boatman's hand. He had never seen Farnsworth miss a fish at gaff. Three quick passes with the gaff, when "Tuna George" generally needed but one, and the dolphin was impaled. As the gleaming sides of the golden-hued form appeared above the gunwhale preparatory to being lifted aboard there were a few quick motions, the fish slipped off the gaff and off the hook, and fled to the depths. His speed and agility were astonishing.

Along the shore there are multitudes of small fry to tempt the fisherman. Among them the barracuda, of the California species, which but distantly resembles his ferocious brother of Florida waters, inhabits California seas throughout the summer.

Barracuda is a slim fish running up to about three feet in length, which provides a fine delicacy at the

table, but which gives rather an aimless type of battle on rod and line. They are taken best on spoons, trolled at a slow speed behind the fishing launch. They travel in large schools and range in weight up to perhaps 15 pounds.

Rock bass are found along the kelp beds. Although they do not reach great size, they are sought by many because of their food value and their fighting characteristics. When taken on a tiny bass rod these fish put up a nice struggle, but "three-six" is too large for them. They strike any small spoon, jig, or spinner. They also easily are caught with live bait. The rock bass resembles his brother of the lakes in size as well as appearance, and affords much pleasure to those who do not care to venture far to sea.

There are a countless variety of the smaller members of the mackerel family, which include the bonita, the mackerel, the skipjacks and many subspecies. These fish may be found in the waters of Catalina off and on throughout the year, and when played on very light tackle are well worthwhile. Some few of our anglers have used a fly rod to some advantage, but it should be borne in mind by those who wish to try their trout rods on ocean game that

they would do well to take their inferior rods. Even a small mackerel can play havoc with this kind of tackle, and when twenty or thirty of them are killed in a day, the rod will come out of the fray more or less the worse for wear, no matter how carefully it is handled. Small spinners and tiny lead jigs are used with great success on these little fish.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

## *A NEW KIND OF FISHING*

IN THE summer of 1927, Farnsworth came to the younger angler and said that he had a new kind of fishing that he wanted to show him. For this purpose he asked that a bow fishing-chair be installed in the boat. When questioned on the new fishing, Farnsworth was very reticent, and advised the angler to possess his soul in patience until the time came for the secret to be divulged.

Although the writer tried to worm the mysterious secret out of the boatman, the only thing he was able to learn about the new fish was that it would weigh in the neighborhood of one hundred and fifty pounds and that it would take a considerably longer time to bring it to gaff than a tuna of equal size. He racked his brains without success to think of a fish of this weight which was not angled for in Catalina waters, but finally gave up and was forced to await enlightenment.

One day he noticed Farnsworth working on a long bamboo pole, which he suspected might have some-

thing to do with the coming sport, but "Tuna George" was evasive when questioned about it.

"When I get ready to show you this new game, I'll tell you, but not before," he said.

At last the great day came when the boatman announced that he was going to try the new fish. The launch was steered into the Clemente Channel where smooth water gave promise of an unknown fight. Patches of kelp floated on the surface, mackerel were schooling, and many porpoises played and leaped in the sunlight; but of big fish there was no sign. The angler was more than curious and watched proceedings with much interest.

Farnsworth took the bamboo, which measured about eight feet in length, and fitted a bit of dowel wood into the hollow of the smaller end. He worked with the latter until it fitted snugly. Then he lashed the bit of wood to the shank of the hook on one of the old swordfish leaders, in such a way that it projected enough to be fitted into the hole in the bamboo pole. He instructed the angler to take his place in the bow chair with heavy tackle rod ready. Next he headed the launch for the nearest school of porpoise.

Farnsworth cut through the school at an angle, following the direction of the game, and leaving his place at the wheel. He took the pole and stood in the bow. When the porpoises came under the flare of the boat, as they generally will, he reached down and snagged one of them in the back near the tail. The dowel wood came out of the pole and left the porpoise hooked to the angler's line.

The porpoise made a great run down into the water, and then came to the top, jumping and trying to shake the hook. It was a beautiful fight, nearly all on the surface, and the rodman was more than surprised at the tremendous amount of power which the foe possessed. He remembered the prediction that his boatman had made as to the length of time which would be required to bring the quarry to gaff, and endeavored to force it to the boat as quickly as he could. He pulled and sweated, and at last got his antagonist up to where he could see the leader, only to have it make a longer run than ever before. Then he began to realize the tremendous strength of the victim.

After twenty minutes of back-breaking effort, he got the leader to the waiting hand of the boatman,

and the battle was over. Imagine the surprise and chagrin when he found that the catch weighed but fifty-six pounds. A tuna of like size could have been killed in less than one quarter of the time. The position of the hook in the porpoise may not have been the entire cause of the difficulty in the struggle.

Several days later the angler again was hooked on to a porpoise. This time it was one of larger size. The quarry put up a very hard battle, running and leaping between periods of sounding. Clamping down as hard as he dared on the drag, the rodman put all the strain he could on the tackle in an effort to defeat the game as quickly as possible.

At the end of an hour and a half he was able to bring it to gaff. To say that he was astounded does not begin to express his feelings; he was more than amazed to find a fighter with such ability. He still believes that it would be next to impossible to capture a porpoise weighing much over two hundred pounds, hooked as his was, on anything like regulation tackle. This one tipped the beam at a little less than one hundred and fifty pounds and raised so much trouble at gaff that it was apparent that it was far from vanquished. During the gaffing it strug-

gled so furiously that Farnsworth was forced to let the big hook tear loose and wait until later to re-gaff it.

The first two porpoises taken by the angler were much in the nature of an experiment and nothing was said about their capture to anyone. It was the idea of the men to wait until later on in the season, getting pictures of the sport, and finally bringing it out and introducing it to the other members of the angling fraternity, but marlin swordfish arrived and their minds were occupied with other things. Toward the end of the summer, the angler hooked another of these great foemen, which he hoped to land and have officially weighed and measured. He fought the brute for nearly two hours, but while the quarry showed no signs of weakening the man was hard pressed to stay on the rod. Unfortunately the hook at last tore out and the beast escaped. Shortly after this the huge schools of porpoise left the waters of the Channel Islands, and the great game of playing them on rod and reel has remained virtually unknown.

It seems to the writers that this new sport has wonderful possibilities. For strength and power the

porpoise has no equal among fish of his weight; he will tax the skill of any angler. These mammals are comparatively easy to hook, and if restrictions were put on the length of the bamboo pole used, and the position where the hook should be inserted definitely established, much enjoyment could be had from this type of sport.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

## *SHARKS AS GAME FISH*

DURING recent years many articles and stories have appeared in current publications on the shark as a game fish, with descriptions, in glowing terms, of fights with these monsters. One angler even went so far as to claim a record because a shark which he had taken weighed a few pounds more than a record swordfish; he evidently considered poundage rather than fighting ability. Those who have fought and landed tuna and swordfish, tarpon and sailfish never can consider sharks anything but what they are; huge, cumbersome brutes which require but little skill to bring to gaff. On the one hand, we have fighters recognized and sought the world over by anglers of all nations; on the other, an unwieldy monster, practically useless except as a scavenger. The shark of American waters never can be classed as a true game fish; it cannot be compared with the broadbill. The slow, sluggish fight of the hammerhead, caused, as it is, by pure weight rather than battling courage, may tempt a rodman new at the game; it may offer practice in angling technique, or

afford a respite from an otherwise dull day, but to those who have taken the mighty broadbill it can be looked upon with nothing but disdain.

Sharks, as a rule, take a bait quite readily. They are very easy to hook, and require no skill or strategy to bring to gaff. The annoying habit which they have of rolling up in a leader is most disconcerting to those who value their tackle, and absolutely ruinous to the wire. Small wonder that the average boatman will say,

"Bring in your line; there's a shark after the bait."

The Mako shark of New Zealand waters is a different proposition. From all accounts, this game fighter is worthy the skill and cunning of any rodman; leaping as it does, it is a very tricky quarry. The stories of battles with the Mako which have reached the writers' ears have made them eager to journey to these foreign seas in search of this foe.

In American waters the hammerhead has been cited as the greatest fighter in the shark family. Recently, the older angler, while trolling for marlin on the three-six tackle and before he had been successful in accomplishing his objective, hooked one of these sharks. After forty odd minutes of rather aim-

less fighting, the brute led up to the boat and was gaffed. His weight was estimated at two hundred pounds. A marlin, weighing one hundred and fifty-five pounds, which later was taken on the same tackle, required more than nine hours of skilful handling of rod and boat. To the writers this is conclusive proof that swordfish are far better game.

How fishermen at Avalon feel about the shark is shown by this:

During a lull in the fishing, the younger angler happened to see a large hammerhead shark cruising on top of the water. For want of something better to do, he persuaded his boatman to get out the heavy tackle so that he might have a try at the monster.

The line was let out, and at the first circle of the boat the shark made for the bait. He took it almost immediately, and was hooked with little difficulty. The angler fought him hard, wishing to see just how long a time he required on such a fish, and taking out a bit of his pent up resentment on the quarry. After thrashing around the surface for a while, during which he ruined a good swordfish leader, and making a few short runs, the shark came

CORMORANTS AT MAGDALENA BAY

BRINGING A YELLOWTAIL TO GAFF

quietly up to gaff, and was killed in the short space of ten minutes.

The angler, thinking that perhaps if he brought the monster into Avalon, it would attract some interest to those ashore and bring more business to the boatmen on the pier—for fishing had been slack and parties few—hauled the shark up on the stern and headed for the bay. Imagine his feelings when he was informed that he had best run the brute out to sea and dump it overboard; it was too much trouble to hang it on the pier.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

## *EQUIPMENT AND BOATS*

PERHAPS a little advice will not be uninteresting to those who read and will be of real value to any who may hope to fight big fish.

Let us divide our equipment into two kinds, viz:

First: Personal, which will include clothes and general accessories.

Second: All things directly connected with the tackle itself.

Boats must be treated separately.

Equipment includes all necessary wearing apparel, commencing from the ground up. There is no question that the type of canvas yachting shoe which does not slip on wet boats is in a class by itself. Golf shoes, especially those with composition soles, are an abomination. Stockings should be short or long woolen, depending upon whether one will wear long or short trousers. Underwear need not be heavy, and drawers are best of short length, above the knee. A woolen sport shirt is much more practical than those of other materials. Not only does the coolness of the climate decide this, but a woolen shirt is much better

when one is overheated in fighting fish. The average outing shirt has not much warmth in an ocean breeze for an angler overwarm from hard work.

Corduroy trousers or khaki overalls are the best outfits, and pairs of the latter cost very little and last a reasonable time. Sweaters or sweater vests will be found useful, and the waterproof shooting jacket is most satisfactory. Remember that the atmosphere of the Pacific Ocean is damp most days from fogs and tangy ocean breezes, and requires that a fisherman be heavily clothed. Oil skins are valuable at times. Hats must protect from the sun. Helmets are the best type. Yachting caps leave the eyes too much open to the violet rays and reflection from the water. Under conditions where men must wear dark glasses, or where there is serious eye trouble, the Crook lens of medium strength gives better visibility than any other colored glass for the average person.

Those who have weak eyes need the heavy colored Crooks. Anglers who wear glasses out of doors ashore, should buy Crook lenses made with their regular prescription. In this connection, the writers' experience has proved that if a helmet is used and in strong sunlight, without wind and much reflection

from the water, the angler can keep under an awning or shade umbrella for part of the time at least a man with strong eyes needs no protection.

So much for the things one wears.

Accessories often make the difference between comfort and discomfort, success or failure. Perhaps the field glass is the most valuable aid of all. Let this be a good glass, not over 8 X at the outside. The 7 X supplies a glass known as "Binoctar," made by Carl Zeiss, and is, at present, the ultimate in field glasses. Note that the 6 X is much to be preferred to powers above 8 X, because boat vibration multiplies with the power of the glass. The field of the glass is of great importance. This must be large and have plenty of light. A glass which draws or strains the eyes is not comfortable and cannot be used hour after hour, as is necessary when hunting fish. Before buying glasses, try them for some time and test various ones for these requirements.

Waterproof articles are always the best. This applies to all personal things, whether tobacco pouches, cigar cases, matchboxes, etc., etc.

Then one must have good thermos bottles and lunch carriers. The lunch at sea is most important.

It is surprising how enjoyable this function is when fishing, and an extra supply of hot coffee, soup or tea helps a lot, if one is out late or is tired after a hard fight. By all means take care of the inner man. Ice water, kept cold in a thermos bottle, revives an angler during a long battle more than anything else. A notebook, by all means, and the best camera one can afford are valuable; the former selected for the amount you expect to write, and the latter if you desire to take pictures. If you wish to photograph jumping fish, use a lens which does not require focusing for anything above short distances. Experiment, if possible, with the telephoto. In any event, have a camera which may be sighted at a fish and which does not require one to look downward through a hood, for such focusing on a tumbling boat is very difficult. As a matter of fact, the movie camera is the best to get photographs of leaping swordfish. One should note that the very small movie cameras cannot have their negatives enlarged.

A sheath knife worn at one's belt is very useful and is a vital necessity in case an angler's harness becomes fouled during a battle and he is pulled overboard attached by heavy line to a strong fish.

If one is able to sketch or paint, he should not neglect the opportunity of portraying the colors of the channel islands, which are marvelously beautiful. The sunsets especially are most intriguing.

A stop watch is well worth while. It aids one to calculate boat speed and distances. The kind which runs up to thirty minutes will take care of the entire period of the ordinary fight, and when compared with a watch will give exact time on a long struggle.

Several charts of the district are important, and also interesting to mark at the end of each day. If you are anything of a navigator, you should take your sextant and a range finding compass. A small log is valuable aid for a run in fog or to learn mileage. Few fishing-boat captains have these aboard.

The radio interferes with the solitude of the ocean. Silence and the thoughts which come to the angler while he searches vast distances of open water demand concentration and quiet.

A pocket flashlight is most valuable, and for a battle which goes into the night a boat should have a large searchlight with enough power to follow the line, which is the most important part of the night contest, or to pick up buoys, etc.

LIGHT TACKLE, SHOWING BUTT SOCKET

THE THREE-SIX OUTFIT

It is not amiss to take a comprehensive first-aid kit. Undoubtedly, personal opinion will suggest other things for each reader's comfort and very likely some of the things mentioned will not appeal.

Of course, many of these items are not absolutely necessary, and should not be considered for a few days' fishing, but if a long campaign is planned, they are well worthy of attention.

When one comes to choose the tackle itself, one has the regulation of the Tuna Club for the Southern California district, but there are a number of important factors which may vary according to individual preference.

Reels are not restricted in any way. The angler may use any type, size, or quality he fancies. For regulation heavy tackle there is a unanimity of expert opinion favoring the size reel known as 9-0. The smaller sizes are for "light" and three-six outfits, the larger for very big game.

In the writers' opinion, there are advantages and disadvantages in connection with one reel when compared with another. Undoubtedly, American reels are superior to foreign makes, for two main reasons, viz: First, they may be repaired and new parts had

at home, and are less complicated. Second, the best known make of foreign reel generally has been constructed of a metal which, although light, has the disadvantage of being affected by salt water, and a corrosion occurs which is difficult to control. In addition to this, foreign makers do not understand our requirements.

A man who intends doing much fishing should decide on his make of reel and stick to it, because the handling of a reel while fighting big fish becomes second nature, and a change of methods necessary on account of a different mechanism is a handicap. This applies to those who are accustomed to any type of reel on large game.

The older angler, after trying several American and foreign makes, has in the past used the E. Vom Hofe reel with good results, but he doubts whether it is as strong as is necessary for very large fish. Nevertheless, he has heretofore liked their arrangement of drags, which may be thrown on or off at will, and their gradual change of the drag tension.

The Coxe reel is used by the younger angler, who values it above all others. Some persons, when using this make, take off the small spring which, when

touched, converts drag to a free spool. Both Vom Hofe and Coxe reels are beautiful pieces of work. It is the opinion of Farnsworth and of the anglers that the Coxe is stronger for big fish, but perhaps, except in the newest model, more difficult to control.

Therefore, learn the use of the Coxe, if slight extra cost is unimportant, especially if you expect to fight very large game. In this connection, the five hundred and seventy-three pound broadbill, which is a world's record for Tuna Club heavy tackle, was taken on a Coxe, whereas, the three-six marlin, the largest fish so far recorded as killed on three-six Tuna Club tackle, was killed on a Vom Hofe. In both cases, the reels gave perfect satisfaction—the Coxe during a five-hour fight of great strain, and the Vom Hofe over a nine-hour period, requiring extreme delicacy. Lately Coxe has brought out a wonderful take-down reel, and in addition has improved his newest offerings by supplying a special equipment which gives a more gradual regulation of drag. This makes the Coxe reel the outstanding mechanism to be had at this time.

Under no considerations buy a reel which has a low and high gear. This adds complication and con-

sequent danger. Big fish are not winched or wound in by the reel. They are pumped by the rod, and when the reel is turned to take in line, it must be a multiplier—about two and one-half to one is the best ratio between the turn of handle and revolution of spindle, the latter, of course, moving faster.

Rods must be restricted to certain dimensions of length and weight, but their bending qualities or backbone vary considerably. For broadbill, the heavy tackle rod should be fairly stiff to very stiff. For big tuna, it may have slightly more whip. For marlin, even greater flexibility is preferable. As a rule, the more whip and the longer the tip up to a reasonable degree, the easier is the work of the angler. The shorter and stiffer tip calls for more strength and endurance.

The old Murphy hickories and bamboos were nearly perfect. Present day rods are very good. Hickories bend out of shape after hard fights and should not be straightened. They lose their life sooner than bamboos. The rod should be chosen for its proposed use, and if for general service be of medium backbone—not too whippy and not too stiff. Hickories are less expensive, but are only available for heavy

tackle. Bamboos should be double or treble skinned. Most rods are too heavy for the line used. Rods must bend in a perfect arc: their guides must be so placed as to distribute the line strain equally. A rod which has the wrapping of its guides rubbed and worn off by the line friction is either not balanced or has its guides located incorrectly. Light tackle rods need backbone, and it is difficult to secure too much. On one "three-six" an angler had four hard fights with marlin besides a fight with a hammerhead shark, and the rod remained as good as new. On another light tackle rod one marlin battle twisted the rod out of shape, and great care was necessary to keep it from breaking. The stiffer the rod with light tackle the easier will the line break. Rods vary.

Rubber hand grips are allowed and may be put on the rod after official weighing, because such grips do not increase the strength of rod but aid the angler more easily to hold it during the playing of his game. The harness is a wonderful help, not only in heavy, but also in light tackle work. Every man cannot be a Samson, and the harness allows those of weaker physique to battle big fish without suffering serious harm during long, drawn out encounters. Undoubt-

edly many anglers, especially older men, should avail themselves of the harness, and with broadbill, big tuna, and big marlin, a harness is necessary to the majority.

Clerks in a sporting-goods store do not, as a rule, know much about tackle for big fish, because they have had little practical experience: when buying tackle, secure the advice of some well-known fisherman or boatman. Perhaps it is wise on a first trip to use tackle supplied by your professional boatman and get first-hand information without extra cost as to the type most adaptable to your own requirements. Be sure your tackle is passed by the Tuna Club before you wet your line. (See rules in chapter on Tackle and Standard.)

Leaders, hooks and accessories first should be studied before purchase is made, unless you have sound advice. Lines must comply with Tuna club rules.

Kites are things which are a law unto themselves. The man who handles the boat flies the kite, and he knows and has procured the article best adapted to his craft and other needs. The flying of kites over tuna requires an apprenticeship under skilled tu-

telage. The beginner must study the rigging of kites, hooks, leaders, double line, etc., before he is qualified to handle them.

Big game fishing needs skill. It is not a matter, as some believe, of dragging a bait through the water, being assured that sooner or later some fish may take it. Rather is it clever and strategic angling for trained, wary fish educated by experience with other fishermen. Most ocean fish live in deadly fear of their lives: even the largest of their species usually have their larger foes of other varieties who must kill them to live. Some have many enemies, not the least of which are sharks and seals. Fish whose lives are in constant danger in this survival of the fittest are just as quick, if not quicker, to learn what fishing tackle means, as are the fish of inland streams. Fresh water fish labeled "game" do not necesarily feed mostly on other fish, but often eat insects and slow-moving food whose capture does not exact speed, ferocity, or great cunning and courage. The man who works his ocean quarry with cleverly cut bait, with certain lures for given conditions, with the kite or the sled which jumps the bait on the surface

or takes it sidewise from the wake of the boat, is the man who succeeds.

The angler for the game of the sea is not working, as of old, in a paradise of many fish: his victim is scarce, wary and hunted by others beside himself.

Statistics prove how many men fail for buttons, not to mention their lack of records. Therefore, learn the requisites of your tackle, and if possible, consult with anglers and skilled boatmen before you buy an outfit.

In closing this chapter of requirements, a word as to seasons and fishing prospects is in order. Do not travel far to Avalon for its small fishing. Yellowtail are rare; white sea bass the same, and such fish as barracuda and small bass are not worth a long trip. Bluefin tuna fishing usually is best in July and August. Marlin seldom appear in numbers before September. Yellowfin of size vary in arrival, but the late part of the summer is perhaps most auspicious: big yellowfin are very uncertain. Broadbill appear in June and last through October, as a rule. They are scarcer than ever lately, and if you have not at least a month at your disposal a trip for them is a losing hazard. Unless it is a good year, an expedition for

tuna, marlin, or broadbill is not worth a long journey to California.

In fact, many of the Tuna Club members consider that the future of our fishing lies in Mexico. Nevertheless, there are seasons when new migrations give good fishing near Avalon. It would be best to establish the situation by writing to the Tuna Club in Avalon or to some friend to wire you if there are any big migrations of fish. Remember that unless it is a big tuna run, it may last but a few days.

Marlin are usually more dependable, and if they come in numbers, they generally stay for some time. Bear in mind that commercial fishing has not yet hurt the marlin.

If you want a button, start early and stay late. Most certainly the experience one gains by working near Avalon would be most valuable in advance of a trip to Mexican waters.

In any event, the lure of the unknown, the interest of the search and the gamble for success urge the angler on. Perhaps you cannot resist it when you consider how many before you have been successful, even if the conditions are not as good as they once were.

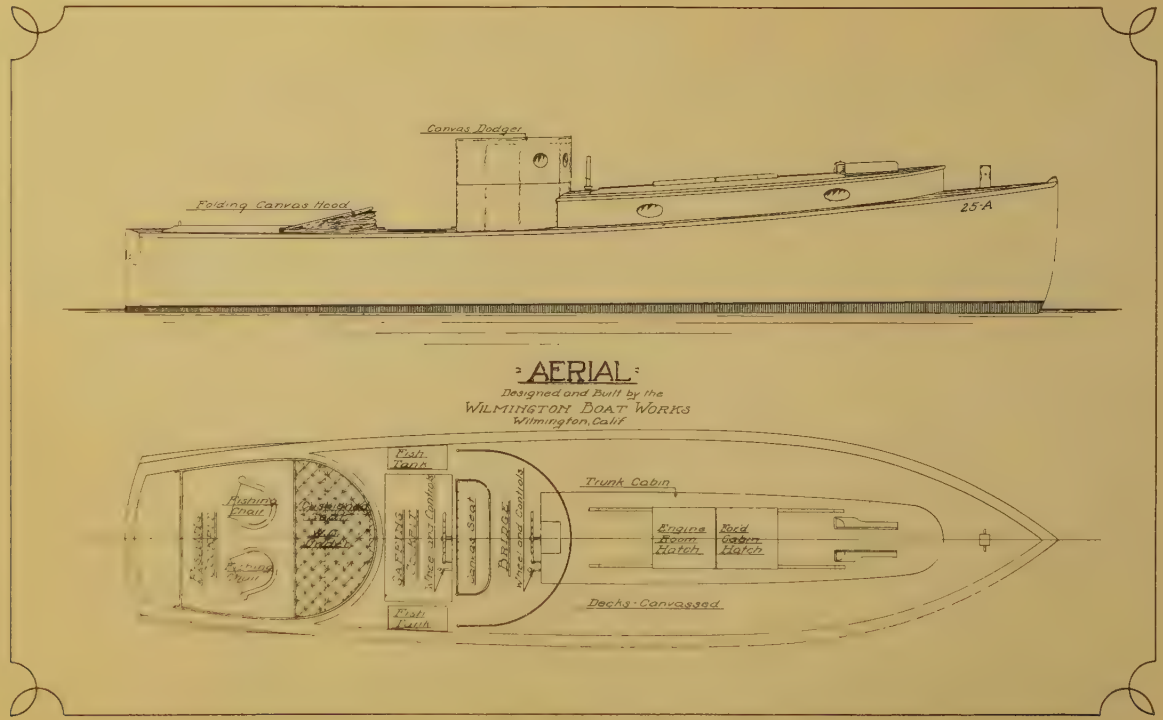
On the first fishing trip a hired boat with its owner boatman is the best bet. One becomes oriented and learns conditions, and may forecast with some degree of certainty the best solution for future plans.

There is much to be said in favor of operating near Avalon, as against long trips in search of game. Perhaps those who work close to their base have the best chance at small fish, and no doubt they avoid rough water and danger of breakdowns far from home. Avalon, undoubtedly, is the best all-season ground for tuna and marlin.

However, when fish are scarce, the long trip appeals. For there is the joy of expectancy, the mystery of exploration, coupled with the more pleasurable experience of fishing alone and not trying to beat other boats to the fish when several parties see the game and race for it.

If you have a boat that is not practical for long trips it is not necessary to go far afield. If you prefer, you can concentrate in the lee if fish are there. With a boat suitable for all conditions there is a choice of program.

There are many kinds of boats, ranging from the old-fashioned, slow, able, heavily-built, round-bot-




PLAN OF THE "AERIAL"—35 FOOT FISHING MACHINE

tomed types to V models of extreme speed and light construction. The craft must suit the uses to which it is put. Necessary space and convenience for cruising usually mean less value for fishing, and *vice versa.* It is almost impossible to have a combination that will secure the ultimate from both the angling and comfort standpoints.

The expense of operation and upkeep is an important factor.

Let us review the necessities of a fishing machine. Seaworthiness is the first requisite, and this is obtained by model, construction and reliability. Sufficient power is, of course, another requirement. One must either know of all these things or secure expert advice which may be relied upon.

Reasonable speed aids seaworthiness and is necessary in order to cover long distances. Extreme speed causes loss of reliability and adds excessive cost to construction and maintenance. Avoid very high-powered, lightly-built V bottom boats with twin screw installations. In fact, avoid any one of these characteristics. The length over all should not exceed forty-five feet, thirty-five feet is better. A larger boat is harder to handle on fish and requires more power.

Your model should be a combination of round bottom and V. This has more speed than the round bottom and will perform better in rough water than the V. She must have enough underbody aft to keep from burying her stern, yet not enough to make her unmanageable in a following sea.

Construction must be heavy, with at least three water-tight bulkheads. Reliability is most important. A twin-screw power-plant has insurmountable drawbacks, which cost more in original outlay and in upkeep. It weighs more and gives less speed per horse-power: it does not work well with one engine, requiring two rudders for proper steering, which interferes with playing large game. Twin screws are dangerous to your line when a fish runs under the boat. To protect them with two keels reduces speed and turning ability. A large engine in the center and a small one at the side are better than twin screws, but this arrangement has disadvantages.

The best power for a fishing boat is one large, heavily-built engine with a medium speed of revolutions per minute. This plant may have, as a reserve for reliability in case of breakdown, a small engine of light weight which will drive the shaft of the big

screw by means of a detachable chain. This second engine is used only in case of emergency; it weighs little, costs little, and may be quickly connected. It should have just enough power to drive the boat steadily to windward against a heavy sea. Your main engine reverse must be of a type that will stand backing for hours during a hard fight. The boat should be dry at cruising speed in heavy weather. It must not throw sheets of spray inboard.

The plan of the "Aerial" portrays a fishing machine. She is seaworthy, and fairly fast, with a maximum speed of twenty miles, and can run all day at close to this rate. A very convenient feature is the gaffing cockpit, with floor level at exactly the right height for the man using the steel. "Aerial" is a day boat: she has accommodations for over night but is not in any way a cruiser.

For a cruiser fisherman it is believed the old type of boat is more practical than the fast V bottom. Something has to be given up in a combination: speed means some lack of comfort and less safety. The writers' idea of a cruiser fisherman is a fifty-footer with one Diesel engine and enough sail to go to windward in case of engine-trouble. Such a boat

is sufficient unto herself for a long cruise, as she is able and comfortable. From it big fish can be caught both on heavy and light tackle. Of course, the fact that it does not have speed and is not as easily handled as a fast boat is a disadvantage. But one may live on such a cruiser and stay at different fishing grounds. For long trips from a base the faster boat has the preference.

The boat recommended has the advantage of economy over a gasoline cruiser of the same length and it gives more room than a gasoline boat built on speed lines. The Diesel engine on this suggested cruiser is safer and has a much greater cruising radius than a gas boat of any speed and restricted size.

Accessories are very important. Bait tanks, umbrellas, if you have no inclosed bridge as on "Aerial," and many other practical helps are well worthy of study.

Sometimes one may buy the boat he needs, and provided the angler knows the game and is careful and thorough in trial and inspection this is much cheaper than building it. To build a boat is a lot of fun, but either the owner must have exact knowledge of what is required or secure someone in whom he can place implicit confidence; otherwise he will run

into much difficulty. The writers have been successful and satisfied with five out of the six boats they have had constructed for fishing during their ten years of effort. The only boat which was unsatisfactory was the first one built.

CHAPTER TWENTY

## *THE FIELD OF MEXICAN FISHING*

THE Pacific shore-line on the Mexican peninsula of Baja California south of the American border aggregates close to one thousand miles. The Gulf of California extends northward for seven hundred miles, and with an average width of over one hundred miles, the east and west sides of the Gulf give a total distance of fourteen hundred miles, not including islands or bays.

Below Mazatlan, near the lower part of the Gulf, on the mainland, we find that the Mexican coast extends well over one thousand miles southward to Guatemala. The total Mexican shore-line is about thirty-five hundred miles in a straight measurement, without considering curves or islands. It runs from above the thirty-second parallel to below the sixteenth, and therefore includes tropical as well as semi-tropical conditions.

This is an enormous fishing territory, some of which is unexplored, much of it undeveloped, with a splendid chance to find new varieties of fish, as well

as to complete the rather sketchy data of known kinds.

The charts of this district are far from adequate. The coast has but few lighthouses, while buoys and other aids to navigation are seldom found. Add to this the fact that such things as fuel oil, gasoline and fresh water are not always obtainable; that ice, drinking water and general supplies are difficult to procure, and the remoteness and lack of necessities will be appreciated. Doctors, medicines, and mechanical parts of machines are hard to find, even in large centers, and any complicated repairs to human or boat machinery are virtually out of the question.

So, an expedition must be sufficient unto itself, able to subsist unaided for long periods, and must have accurate knowledge of where essentials may be found: careful preparation must be made so that the explorers may be able to exist on their own resources from one base of supplies to another.

For this reason there have been but few boats sufficiently well equipped to venture over the entire coast. Some men, such as Keith Spalding, Allan Hancock, W. J. Hole and others, have been fortunate

to own such vessels and be able, from a financial standpoint, to explore not only the entire mainland shore, but also the outlying islands. Mr. and Mrs. Keith Spalding have made more cruises to this vast region than anyone else and have done more pioneer work in fishing than any other anglers of whom we know, and their data, as well as the pictures which they have generously offered have been of utmost value in producing this book.

The selection of time of the year one goes to Mexico is of the greatest importance, because during certain seasons there are very severe storms, and at stated periods parts of the area are subject to extreme heat. During the spring and early summer it is practicable for small boats to go part way down the peninsula of Lower California, but none except very able vessels should attempt extended cruises or exploring. Below Cedros (Cerros) Island the weather may be dangerous during our summer season.

The various fishing-fields may be summarized as follows:

As far as Turtle Bay, the peninsula coast gives about the same fish as are found in California waters,

A TUNA WEIGHING OVER 100 LBS. WHICH HAD BEEN ATTACKED BY A SHARK

MRS. KEITH SPALDING'S BIG SAILFISH

MRS. KEITH SPALDING'S 220 LB. SWORDFISH. CAPE SAN LUCAS

with the addition of cross-bred mackerel. From Santa Maria Bay south the semi-tropical fish commence, and from Cape San Lucas south the tropical fish appear. The lower portion of the Gulf offers fish found at the Cape, and the northern part supplies some varieties of its own, as well as most of those indigenous to the northwest seacoast.

Fishing for medium-sized varieties is very good throughout all districts and is worthy of attention, particularly during those times of the year in which the larger kinds are not plentiful. In this connection, it is most necessary if the anglers desire big fish or records, to try for them at the seasons which are more promising, and while it is possible to kill sizeable specimens over almost the entire zone at any time, it is nevertheless very important to select the best locations, as well as the most favorable periods of the year in an effort to secure really outstanding catches. Migrations vary, and one place does not always present the same opportunity, even during the best months.

Among the larger game fish, the broadbill may be found in the far south, but as a rule he is scarcer there than further north, and the upper part of the

peninsula is perhaps the best place to secure him. He also appears in the Gulf, spring and summer.

The marlin swordfish has a wider range and a greater migration than the other swordfish, and undoubtedly there are different types of marlin which grow to extreme size. The typical striped marlin of Catalina roams in widely separated districts throughout Mexican waters, but the truly huge specimens, particularly the black marlin, are believed to be in greater number below Cape Corrientes, although the record black marlin was killed by Hole at Cape San Lucas. In his last expedition in 1929, Hole advises that he lost at the Cape a large marlin which he believed to weigh fully two hundred pounds above his record fish of five hundred and nine pounds. Zane Grey in "The Fisherman," lost a fight with a big marlin which he believed to be approximately the same as the black marlin of New Zealand, and there is much data to prove that very large marlin exist from Cape Corrientes southward, not exceptions, as further north, but more or less as a repeated occurrence.

There is no question that, sooner or later, more of these fish and larger ones will be killed. Hole's

wonderful specimen is on exhibition at the Los Angeles Museum, and the authorities there believe this to be a distinct type from the striped marlin.

The sailfish of the western coast exceed the size of the Atlantic specimens, but not so much as the marlin exceed the eastern prototype. The record was first set by Keith Spalding with a fish of one hundred and thirty odd pounds, and was afterwards raised by Zane Grey to something over one hundred and forty pounds. The record is now held by Hollingsworth, who fished on one of Hole's expeditions, with a catch of over one hundred and sixty pounds. Farnsworth gaffed both Hole's and Hollingsworth's record fish.

Sailfish are less frequently found north of Cape San Lucas, but they run in the Gulf certainly as far north as Ceralbo Island, from which specimens have been taken by different well-known expeditions, and where our anglers saw fish but did not secure strikes. Undoubtedly, during spring and summer they reach more northern points. However, from Cape Corrientes south is the best ground for sailfish; in other words, they are located there in quan-

tities, whereas with less frequency at the Cape and adjacent territory.

Three types of large tuna are killed in these waters. The bluefin tuna, which is the same as the California type, is seldom taken south of the Bonita Islands, just west of Cedros. Information from various sources proves that this fish comes in from off shore above Guadalupe and northward, the migration extending to California waters, but seldom appears in numbers much beyond Santa Barbara, although specimens have been taken further north than this.

From information obtained by Keith Spalding in his various cruises to Cape San Lucas, there seems to be a diversity of opinion among commercial fishermen regarding the bluefin coming as far south as this point. Some fishermen claim to have caught them; others say they do not appear there, but from all evidence it seems they are found infrequently, if at all. A large cross bred tuna is a possibility. Yellowfin have been reported as weighing seven hundred pounds and bluefin two hundred and fifty pounds.

The yellowfin tuna covers a much wider territory

in his migration than the bluefin or than the Allison. He is found on the California Coast, along the Peninsula, at the Cape, in the Gulf and south of it. The Mexican fish is more brilliantly colored than those taken in California waters, the gold center stripe along his lateral line being very marked. He is a distinct variety. This fish varies greatly in size. In southern seas he takes any bait readily and it is not necessary to use a kite in the capture of any of these tuna, as is required in California bluefin angling.

The Allison tuna is seldom discovered very far north of the Cape. He runs to large size (several hundred pounds) and is a most wonderful fighter, with approximately the same peculiarities as those of his tribe so well known in Catalina history, except that he takes the troll readily.

The weather is often one of the hardest features to overcome in Mexican fishing, as able launches are necessary to kill big fish in these waters. As a usual thing, there are strong winds in the afternoon, causing a heavy, short chop, which makes fishing for large game difficult and dangerous.

There is no possible question that West Coast

Mexican fishing offers a new field of the greatest possibilities for all types of angling, but it must be emphasized most strongly that it would be ill-advised for expeditions to start for these waters without staunch boats, thoroughly equipped, and an exact understanding of the conditions to be encountered. Most certainly it is wise to have on board men who have visited this country and know the local conditions.

Undoubtedly, it is possible to kill smaller kinds at almost all times of the year, although these varieties migrate the same as our fish do in California, and vary in appearance and numbers; but for large fish, the best opportunity is presented from February to May throughout the southern part, during which period the angler must expect to experience extremely enervating heat at times.

The islands situated well off the mainland give somewhat different fish and conditions. The kingfish of New Zealand, known in Florida as "wahoo" is found at Clarion and Socorro Islands. There are strange sharks off shore which put up strong opposition to rod and reel. At Guadalupe the herd of sea elephants is of interest. These nearby Pacific Islands

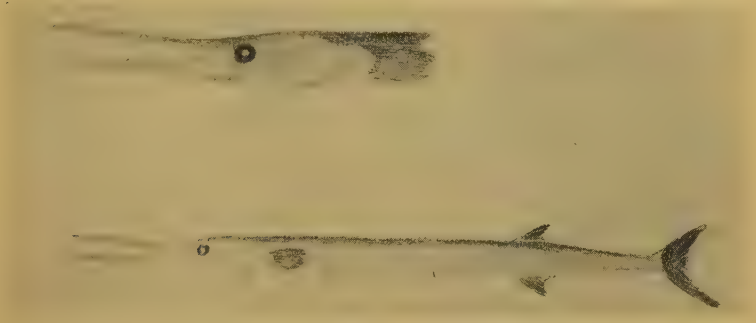
PACIFIC KINGFISH OR WAHOO—ACANTHOCYBIUM SOLANDRI

*Description:* But one specimen was taken from "Radio." Weighed fifty and a half pounds. A thin, elongated member of the mackerel family. Back bluish in color, with a number of straight branching bars running vertically through it and fading out as they approached belly. These bars were of almost black hue. Tail thick, heavy, and very dark. Dorsal fin very long, extending almost to secondary dorsal, and low in front, arching up before dropping quickly. Belly light iridescent blue.

*Distribution:* Reported to be plentiful at the Galapagos Islands and further south. Specimen taken by the "Radio" was landed one hundred miles north of Cape San Lucas, and no records can be found of other captures in this vicinity.

*Habits:* Unknown.

*Capture:* Taken on a fast trolled feather jig. Put up a tremendous fight on trolling line.



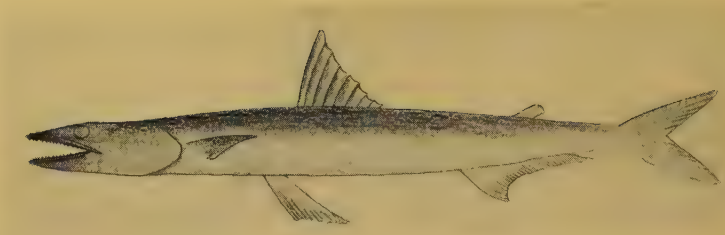
NEEDLE-FISH OR AGUJON—TYLUSURUS FODIATOR

*Description:* Attains length of three feet or more, and is very gar-like in shape. Blue color on dorsal side, which fades to silver toward belly. Fins are few and rather small. Most interesting mouth, which is almost bill-shaped in structure, being bony and set with very sharp teeth. Eye is large.

*Distribution:* In all tropical seas.

*Habits:* Much like those of its near brother the flying-fish. Forms a food for larger game, and, being constantly harassed, is extremely nervous. When pursued, it often will leap clear of surface for many feet.

*Capture:* Due to the long narrow jaws, this fish is most difficult to hook, and plugs with clusters of barbs are almost essential for capture. Makes a fine trolling bait for larger fish, but must be put on hook with care to prevent spinning.



LIZARD FISH—SYNODUS JENKENSI

*Description:* A tiny individual, seldom reaching a length of more than seven inches. High and abrupt dorsal fin, large ventral and anal fins, and forked tail. Mouth pointed with flat and snake-like head. Jaws filled with needle-like teeth, and give it appearance of the lizard, from which it takes name. Light bronze color, which fades to almost white on belly.

*Distribution:* Found along coast of Lower California, in the Gulf, and further south along the Mexican coast.

*Habits:* Unknown.

*Capture:* Specimen taken by the "Radio" was caught on large hook which almost exceeded the size of fish. The line had been set for bass and the strike hardly was felt.

BARRACUDA—SPHYRAENA ENSIS

*Description:* This species of barracuda is much like that found at the Channel Islands. Nineteen or twenty rather wide band or vertical stripes running down sides between pectoral fin and tail. Mouth is large with pointed snout, and teeth well developed and fang-like. Fins are small, those on ventral side being practically opposite those above. Dorsal fin commences over third of way back from snout to tail, and soft dorsal is equidistant to it and tail, which is forked.

*Distribution:* Gulf of California to Panama.

*Habits:* Like the northern barracuda, this fish travels in schools. Feeds on small fry of all sorts.

*Capture:* Readily may be taken on small spoons trolled slowly, and affords fine eating.

are well worthy of the attention and exploration of fishermen for tuna and big game.

The Mexican government officials require the regulation ship's papers and documents, information concerning which may be obtained at Mexican consulates in the United States.

Fishing permits may be had for the different states in Mexico at ports of entry in each district. Expeditions will find co-operation from officials and customs brokers.

The rules and regulations are not difficult to understand, the main thing being to follow the universal custom of clearing for and proceeding to a recognized port of entry, not only from California, but from one Mexican port to another. It sometimes is advisable to notify the port by telegraph of your arrival. This applies usually to southern places below Mazatlan—for example, Manzanillo.

It is understood that later on it may be possible to secure permits for Mexican fishing from Mexican consulates in the United States, and it should be noted that the port of entry for Cape San Lucas is San Jose del Cabo, eighteen miles from the fishery dock at the Cape, although it is rumored that the

Cape itself may be made a port of entry; but under the present regulations a vessel first should proceed to San Jose del Cabo before fishing at the Cape, permit to fish at the Cape being procurable at the port of entry noted.

The inhabitants throughout this country will be found not only friendly, but anxious to aid expeditions, and their help is at all times most valuable.

Means of communication with the United States is possible through the Southern Pacific R. R. System which runs south from Nogales to Guaymas and Mazatlan, thence turning away from the coast to Guadalajara.

The two best railroad connections are at Guaymas and Mazatlan, and the Southern Pacific service on this line now runs six days out of the week with an approximately forty-eight hour journey from Guaymas to Los Angeles, and the greater part of another day from Mazatlan.

The roads for automobiles throughout Mexico are uncertain and on the Lower California peninsula below the border it is not practical to consider going further south than Ensenada without a guide.

As a usual thing, the ocean trip north from Cape

San Lucas is against headwinds and therefore much rougher than the trip south from the United States.

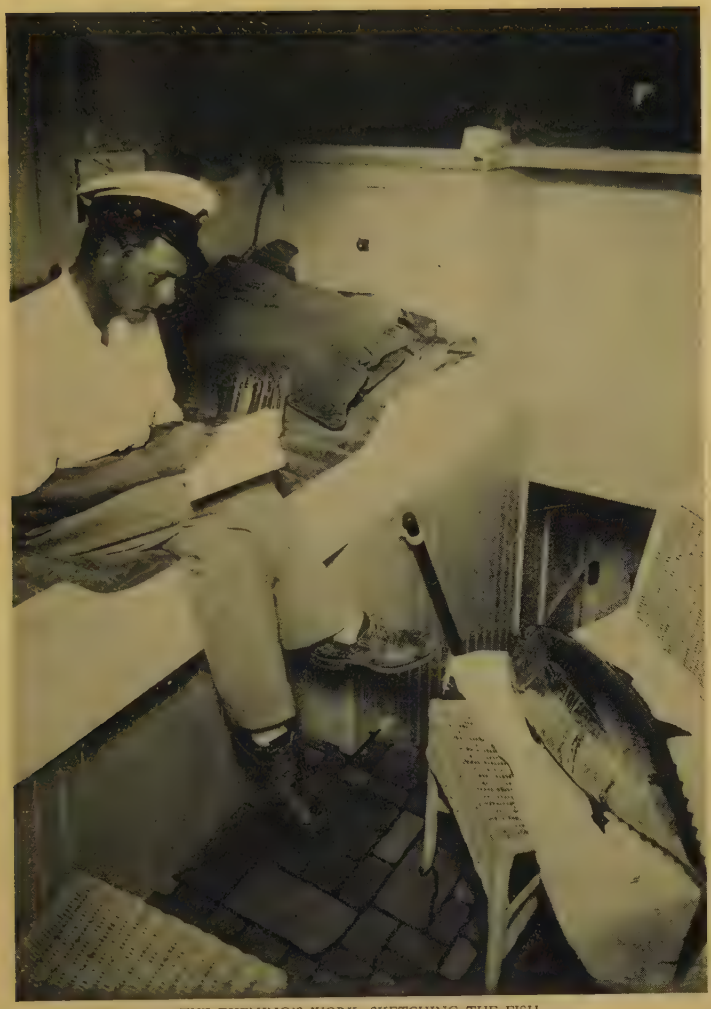
It is practical for fishermen to meet their vessels at either Guaymas or Mazatlan for fishing in the Gulf, or for them to go south on the boats and avoid the rough sea trip back by taking the train north, if they so desire.

South of Mazatlan, on the coast, the railroad connections are very poor.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

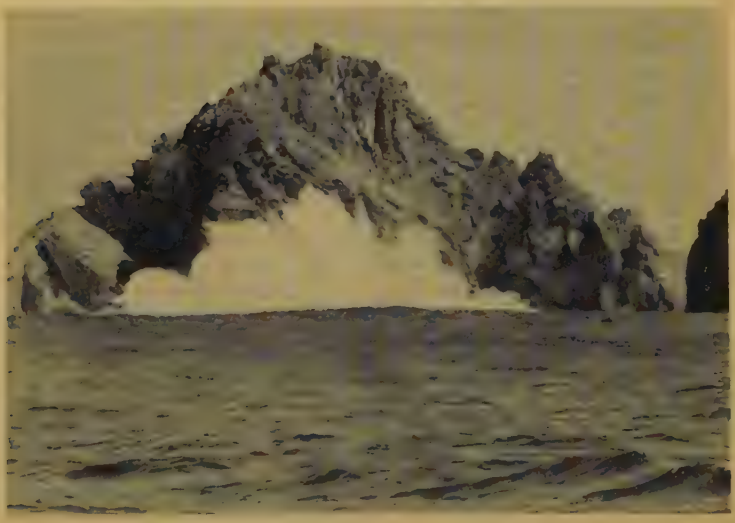
## *TACKLE AND EQUIPMENT FOR MEXICAN WATERS*

SINCE the waters off the coast of Lower California and in the Gulf of California, as well as near the shores of western Mexico, are more or less remote from the so-called civilized part of the world, it is necessary that those who contemplate a trip into this field to enjoy the fine fishing which it offers, should go well equipped for the fishing and shooting. As has been intimated, it is almost an impossibility to procure tackle or any sporting goods in the Mexican ports, and a boat should not leave for these parts unless those on board have seen to it that they have supplies, provisions and equipment enough to last them for a considerable period. It is hoped that this chapter will be an aid in helping anyone who desires to take such a trip, and it should be understood that in addition to the articles herein mentioned, there will be many others best enumerated by the dictates of the traveller himself which will contribute materially to the success of the voyage.



THE EVENING'S WORK: SKETCHING THE FISH

"THE HOLE IN THE WALL," CAPE SAN LUCAS



SURF AT CAPE SAN LUCAS. ROCKS OVER 300 FEET HIGH

It would seem best first of all to consider the matter of personal equipment and clothing. Due to the extreme warmth of the climate in this part of the world, light wearing apparel will be worn most of the time on land and on shipboard. White duck coats and trousers prove very comfortable while lying at anchor and ashore, and being easily laundered, are most convenient. They may be purchased at practically any naval outfitters, as may be most of the other clothing taken on the trip. Yachting outfits are most comfortable when the ship is under way, and heavy pea-jackets, oilskins, and boots should be taken for rough weather. It must be borne in mind that there will be a great many changes of climate, and diversified clothing is a great necessity as well as comfort. Underclothing may be left to the taste of the individual, with several warm suits taken for cold and rainy days. It is essential that many changes of clothing be carried, for most of the laundry work will be done in port, and it often is long between stops. Hunting boots are a great convenience if much hiking or hunting is planned while ashore. The outfits described for Cali-

fornia fishing with the additions as noted will be satisfactory in the South.

The choice of supplies for the culinary department should be left to the *chef* of the expedition, as he best will be able to judge the needs of his employers. It may be remembered, however, that fish will form a great part of the diet, and fresh meats and other supplies procured en route. As a suggestion with regard to the fresh meat, it is best to buy the whole carcass of the animal and have it butchered aboard, as quality will then be assured.

Navigation instruments and the equipment of the ship may be turned over to the discretion of the captain, who probably will have his own ideas on the subject. Plenty of ground tackle should be insisted upon, however, as it is a comfort to know that a ship is not going to drag her anchor, and the latest charts are necessary, as many of the anchorages are tricky places to get into, especially at night. In this connection a good searchlight is something which should not be overlooked.

A few words about the fishing-launch would not seem out of place. This should be as large as it is possible conveniently to carry on the mother ship.

It must be seaworthy and easily handled, but need not be extremely fast. A small reliable motor is best, as it will give less grief in the long run. Plenty of spare parts should be taken for this engine, as the success of the trip will depend on it to a great extent. The launch on the "Radio" was a twenty-two foot whale-boat design, with a thirty-five horsepower Gray motor, which gave it a speed of approximately eight miles an hour. It was equipped with a spray hood for heavy weather, and had two fishing chairs mounted in the stern. This boat served its purpose admirably, but a trifle more speed and size would have added much to its usefulness. Dories or small boats always will be found invaluable.

Fishing tackle is an item upon which considerable care must be spent, and too much stress cannot be placed on the fact that plenty of rods, lines, and lures must be taken. In these waters one never knows just what kind of game will strike next, and the number of hooks which are lost is appalling. In addition to the three sizes of regulation Tuna Club tackle, the "heavy," the "light" and the "three-six," of which two rods of each should be supplied per man, there is the extra heavy rod for big swordfish

and tuna. The tip of the latter should weigh in the neighborhood of twenty ounces, and must be strong enough to stand all the strain that the angler can put upon it with a harness. Hickory is good wood for a rod of this kind, but excessive stiffness must be avoided as it will tire an angler in a long fight. The reel to go with this rod should be of standard make, preferably a Coxe or a Vom Hofe, but the new 9-0 Coxe is more economical with 36 thread line, although the 12-0's, both Vom Hofe and Coxe, will hold 450 yards of 39 thread. The differences between these two reels may be noted in the preceding chapter on equipment for Catalina fishing. The specifications of the regulation tackle as well as the reels which fit them also are explained in that chapter.

In addition to these rod sizes, it is a good plan to take a tip mid-way between the Tuna Club light and heavy tackle. This may be nine or ten ounces in weight, used with eighteen thread line and a 6-0 reel. The angler will find this latter tackle invaluable for fishing along the shore where he is uncertain what he will hook next. It is strong enough to enable him to play large fish, yet light enough to give him the full benefit of the small fish's fight.

Since much fishing will certainly be done from the deck of the mother ship, enough small tackle should be included so that the time while lying at anchor may be whiled away. Fresh-water-bass rods will afford great sport, and plenty of hooks and lines procured.

As many lines will be broken by big fish, it is essential that enough of them be secured to last throughout the trip. Each rod and reel should have at least three complete lines, and a reserve supply is advisable; in other words, one cannot take too much tackle to this district on a long trip. The following lines will be needed:—thirty-nine or thirty-six thread for the extra heavy rod, twenty-four thread for the regulation heavy tackle, eighteen thread for the nine or ten ounce tip, fifteen and nine thread for the regulation light tackle rod, and the three-six line. It should be noted that catches in southern waters will have no restrictions as to the breaking strains of lines, and the strongest ones procurable should be bought to insure against breakage. Other small bass lines will be found useful around the boat, and odd lines of any size always come in handy. If much kite fishing is done, old twenty-four threads will

answer the purpose admirably. Hooks of all sizes are necessary, and it is a good plan to buy the airplane swordfish leader wire and the piano wire used for ordinary leaders in spool form, as it then may be cut to any desired length. Swivels, sinkers and other knicknacks prove very useful, and the tackle kit should include tools, rod varnish, extra guides, and wrapping silk. Artificial lures of almost any sort are good, as the fish in these waters are not in the least particular upon what they bite. If a bait does not seem to attract fish, often if the speed of the boat is changed better results will be forthcoming, in that the working of the bait will be changed also. However, Knowler Automatic Strikers, and Wilson spoons, which are still better (sizes 6 and 7), are of almost vital importance and should be taken in great quantity, as ofttimes half a dozen of them will be lost in a single day. With reference to these spoons, it is advisable to have larger and stronger hooks attached in place of the ones which come with the lure, as cabrilla play havoc with lighter steel. Tarporinos of the large size also are well worth taking, but it is practical to make your own and use stronger hooks. Feather and bone-jigs with large

strong hooks are best for tuna, while plugs, spinners and minnows are needed for small fish. Plenty of small leader-wire will be found necessary.

Two detachable and two straight tuna gaffs are indispensable, as are smaller yellowtail and bass gaffs. Tuna kites are not a necessity, but often will come in handy. There should be harnesses, butt sockets, belt sockets and sundries to fit all rods.

Rifles and shotguns may be left to the individual tastes of the sportsman, but plenty of ammunition must be taken for these guns as it is impossible to procure shells at the Mexican ports. A good pistol for sharks will prove a boon, and other small arms will afford a respite to many an otherwise dull hour. If the angler desires to have the thrill of harpooning a manta ray, the harpoon gun or hand harpoon will constitute a necessity.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

## *MEXICAN LIGHT TACKLE FISH*
### *WITH SHORT COMPARISONS OF THEIR FIGHTING CHARACTERISTICS*

ADVOCATES of filmy tackle, men who love to kill trout and bass, would revel in the smaller salt-water game-fish of Western Mexico, which may be taken with very light outfits under proper conditions, when there is no interference from larger fish or sharks.

The needlefish is remarkably speedy and very difficult to hold, because of its extremely bony jaws. When fast, it not only jumps, but actually flings itself from the water and throws the steel without much trouble. It is almost necessary to foul this long, slim, arrowlike flash of the gar family, in order to take it with a single hook, and therefore it is permissible to use a gang to effect its capture: otherwise, one cannot boat his quarry in a dozen strikes. The average specimen weighs from three to four pounds and is over three feet in length. The largest recorded was taken by Keith Spalding and ran twelve pounds.

The ladyfish (bonefish) also shows lightning speed and is lost not only because it throws the entanglement most adroitly, but because of its delicate mouth structure the metal easily "tears out."

Both of these varieties are tricky fighters and yet without extreme strength, and there is necessity that a rapid multiplying reel be used in order to keep a tight line when the fish jumps and runs toward the rod. Otherwise, slack is secured and the lure more readily dislodged.

It is not difficult to find both of these swift fighters where there is no opposition from big fish, and when a school is located it is practical to get strikes almost every time the trolls are passed through them.

The Sierra mackerel, often listed as "king mackerel," "cavella," or "cero," is by all odds the most beautiful of its family. This variety is found over a tremendous area and is perhaps the best food fish of the Mexican varieties, being of most delicate flavor, and is a resourceful, interesting warrior because of its hard strikes, its repeated darting runs, quick leaps and gameness. The very lightest tackle should be used in taking it. Our party secured three of slightly over twelve pounds, and there are no

records of this fish exceeding this weight on the west coast. Sierra may be "salted" and kept for long periods; thorough washing before cooking is necessary, after which the meat is delicious.

Sheepshead, crevalle and red snapper are others adapted to light or very light angling, but during winter in the Gulf there are not enough of these in any one place and undisturbed to warrant special effort. Further south, or in summer, crevalle and red snapper are very much larger and would not be adaptable to the lightest tackle. Bonita, skipjack, kelp bass and the various cross-bred mackerel which are found in these waters, give superlative sport on "three-six."

Dolphin and roosterfish are more difficult to find north of the Cape in winter, and they vary in size. Dolphin do not often reach twenty pounds in this section, and roosterfish average about the same weight, so that both are particularly fitted to the use of small rods and lines. The largest roosterfish which we killed on "three-six" weighed twenty-eight pounds, and took thirty-five minutes of hard work to land. Farther south, both of these kinds run larger. The dolphin is a trifle faster, but not so strong as the

A CATCH OF WHITE SEA-BASS
These fish run over 200 pounds in weight

By Courtesy of Mack Sennett

A BIG MANTA RAY

DOWN CHARGE! A SEA-ELEPHANT AT GUADALUPE ISLAND

WEIGHING A BIG CABRILLA

roosterfish. Both are surface fighters and make extremely speedy dashes, and they jump repeatedly and are almost certain to adopt this method of escape when close to the boat.

Without in any way detracting from the admittedly remarkable fighting and gamey qualities of the bass and trout, it may be said without fear of contradiction, that dolphin and roosterfish are more spectacular, faster, stronger and equally game. Big dolphin and roosterfish as found below Mazatlan are among the last words for "three-six" or light tackle work, and both are of astounding beauty and individuality in form and coloring.

The various cabrilla are entirely different from those just mentioned. They are in reality large bass with the pronounced peculiarity of giving nearly everything in their initial effort to reach the rocky bottom in a very strong and almost irresistible rush, thereby being able to break the line among the rocks. This first powerful dash of heavy fish cannot be stopped with ordinary tackle. Our best specimen on "three-six" was a thirty-pound common cabrilla, which was hooked over sandy bottom, and when it could not find rocks, ran off over two hundred feet of

line before it could be turned. It is difficult to find small cabrilla by themselves, and therefore the little ones are generally handled on tackle too heavy for them, and after their first strenuous rush they quickly are exhasted. On 15 or 18-thread line with 6 or 10-ounce tip it is difficult to stop fifty-pound individuals, and our largest one on light tackle (that is, regulation 9-thread line and 6-oz. tip) was taken by George III. and weighed eighty-five pounds.

To get big cabrilla, it is best to use fish of another kind as bait, and it is not necessary that this be alive. Cabrilla takes such an offering much more readily than it does a live specimen of its own kind. Reports state that this variety of fish reaches two hundred pounds weight in the common variety, and the pintas are very large also, but the red and gold specimens, while much more beautiful and attractive, are not so plentiful. We did not secure any of large size, thirty pounds being the limit. In addition to these noted there are other varieties of cabrilla, but all have much the same characteristics when hooked.

In speaking of yellowtail, one comes to a fish of great fighting ability, grace of outline and attractive coloring. On three-six tackle the average

yellowtail is a battle for any angler. Specimens in the Gulf are superior to those of Catalina in average and extreme size. The Tuna Club record is sixty and one-half pounds, but of late years the weights are not so high, a fish of thirty-one pounds being the largest in ten seasons, whereas, in the Gulf it is not difficult to secure individuals of over thirty pounds, and the average fish will run beyond twenty pounds. The yellowtail is a hard, fast, enduring fighter. He does not often jump nor does he rush for the rocks, but he continues to make fierce, strong dashes, and on proper tackle taxes the skill and endurance of the angler to the limit. A fish of fifty pounds in the Gulf is rare, but it is believed there are larger ones at Guadalupe Island, yet none of them compare in size with the record fish taken in New Zealand waters.

The turel is closely identified with the yellowtail, and in fall and winter usually is found below Mazatlan. Our best specimen tipped the beam at eighty-two and a half pounds. This fish is also a worthy foeman on the lightest equipment: his fight is much like that of the yellowtail, perhaps not quite so swift, but a little stronger.

The pargo is a hard, fighting warrior. He is listed as a type of red snapper, but to all intents and purposes is a swift bass. From Mazatlan south both these fish may be taken in quantity, and there is little danger of interference from sharks.

We captured a type of runner weighing twelve pounds which has never before been recorded. It was found near Ceralbo Island, and may be plentiful at certain periods. (Illustrations given elsewhere in this text show its great beauty.) The writers named it "rainbow yellowtail." It was very fast.

Quotations from the diary written on November 11th at Carmen Island, about two hundred miles above Cape San Lucas in the Gulf of California, will give a good idea of very light tackle-work in these waters:

"We are anchored in Ballandra Bay, which is a beautiful, completely land-locked harbor situated on the west shore of Carmen Island near its north end. Undoubtedly, this anchorage is in the crater of an extinct volcano. The chart gives the depth of water as five fathoms, but at mean tide there are ten fathoms in the center of the anchorage, although in

coming across the bar or reef between it and the Gulf the depth is only five fathoms.

"It was a lovely day, with a light breeze from the north in the morning. Started early in the launch and took a five-pound cabrilla before we got out of the harbor, and a fifty-pound cabrilla pinta just outside. There were no yellowtail at the small island (Cholla Island) just beyond the northwest end of Carmen Island, where Farnsworth usually gets them.

"Lost a couple of spoons on big cabrilla; impossible to stop them from getting to the rocks. Outside and to the north, we found schools of a fish which Farnsworth has never caught. These apparently weighed ten to fifteen pounds, and were surfacing in considerable numbers. Tried in every way to secure bites, but without success. Water shallow—only a few feet between the small island northwest of the point and the point itself. No tuna in sight. Bay between northwest point and north point has reefs running out from shore with breaking water—keep well out! Trolled around the north point and then started back. The anglers had bet the photographer that they would get one new kind of fish and four

different varieties today and by 10:30 A.M. had secured nothing but cabrilla and sheepshead.

"A few big swirls in the water marked some kind of large fish. Bang! Whir! A heavy strike, followed by a fierce, hard run. Thinking it was another strong cabrilla, the angler tightened his drag to the limit, forcing up a fast moving quarry which jumped and thrashed. 'Not too hard,' yelled Farnsworth, 'it's a big one.'

"Even against the heavy drag, this fish had run off a good 100 feet, and now with more freedom from the eased pressure he rushed frantically to the left and close to the surface, also making two short leaps.

" 'Careful! It's a roosterfish.' 'Don't lose him! Wait until I get a picture.' These and similar cries from the other three occupants of the launch caused the fisherman to use every care, and after a number of fierce, but gradually lessening rushes, a beautiful, silver, flashing iridescent fish with erect, trailing, vivid green-black dorsal resembling the comb of a game cock, was forced near the boat—still fighting in short, hard, quick dashes and leaps. 'Look out!'

Your hook is tearing! 'Don't let him get under the boat!'

"The drag eased still more—a few despairing efforts, and with silver gleaming sides and reflections from the rainbow sheen of his blue, green and rose shadings, the first roosterfish of our trip is gaffed and comes aboard!

"It is remarkable to kill one so far up the Gulf at this time of the year. We see a marvelous fish of unparalleled splendor—by all odds the most distinct and rare of all silver fighters—a quarry of beauty, coupled with strength and agility. One is sorry to kill him. Over twenty varieties to date, and this wins the bet for a new fish.

"Going on, fresh thrills await us. A needlefish tearing away close by claims concentrated attention. Something is chasing him. Apparently, the needlefish jumps more to see where his enemy is, or to avoid him, than to attain speed. The surface bulges behind the luckless prey, which hurls itself from the water, almost seeming to fly, so great is its velocity. The wake following the fleeing fish parts; there is a gleam of gold. A dolphin rises free and clear and carries forward almost a dozen feet, coming out

for the evident purpose of locating its victim, in this race of life and death between two of the swiftest fish known.

"In the next jump, the needlefish makes a last, desperate effort to escape, turning back quickly at right angles as it leaves the water. But the dolphin is even faster, checks itself as it leaps, whirls sharply and takes the victim in mid-air, much as a greyhound stops a turning rabbit. The ray of silver merges and is extinguished by a blaze of glittering flame, and both go out in a splash of white water. The waves from the disturbance spread out, the surface gradually flattens—no hint of the tragedy remains.

"It was a small dolphin. Can there be any larger ones? Perhaps those 'wakes' further out may mean something. The launch circles. A strike—a gleam of bronze—a lightning rush of scintillating yellow—a leap of sparkling fire.

"The dolphin tears off line in a frenzy of speed. He is even swifter than the roosterfish, but not so strong. He is turned, but is away instantly on a new course. It is necessary to reel frantically to keep him from getting slack and throwing the hook. His turns become slower, his dartings more restricted. He is

brought close to the boat, gaffed and taken aboard. Another miraculously lovely sight—two fish of incomparable quality in form, in coloring and fighting character taken within a few moments, and in the opinion of the four men, the most perfect specimens of gold and silver varieties, each absolutely distinct from other sorts, each above competition by any fish of its size from the standpoint of beauty or gameness. The dolphin makes the fourth different fish taken in succession. Cabrilla, sheepshead, roosterfish, dolphin—truly, the north end of Carmen Island is more than worthwhile as an angler's paradise. Recalling his past experiences with many types of fish, our rodman does not remember any occasion when he secured a greater amount of thrill in the surroundings, the quest, the strike, the battle and the superlative quality of the vanquished."

"It is not necessary to kill size to secure the acme of fishing. The trout enthusiast realizes this in the filmy delicacy of his equipment, in the perfect color of his catches, and the skill he must use to succeed.

"Dolphin and roosterfish cannot be surpassed, and the setting of the contest as waged near Carmen was a sapphire inland sea with islands of vari-colored vol-

canic rock as a contrast—the whole surrounded by the perfect turquoise blue of a semi-tropic sky.

"In the Gulf of California during November one finds the temperature of our Atlantic June, but without humidity. Here is a multiplicity of fighting fish of many kinds, unhindered by sharks to interfere with the capture.

"To avoid cabrilla, keep away from the shore and rocks or shallow water with stony bottom, and the lightest of tackle may be used to play the dolphin and the roosterfish.

"In the afternoon, the two anglers tried south of Ballandra Bay, securing Sierra mackerel and a great many ladyfish. One school of the latter was in the second bay south of the harbor and gave strikes every time the trolls went through them; they ran from four to five pounds.

"The launch came back to the schooner through a golden sea reflected from the afterglow, and as the twilight deepened, a blue phosphorescence appeared in our bow-waves, contrasting strangely with the red sunset far astern, which showed vividly beyond the black shadows of the nearer coast range."

Another fish that gives superlative sport on medium sized or light tackle is the giant barracuda. These are very much larger than the California variety, and generally are found below Cape Corrientes in the wintertime, as far as Sihuatanejo. They have been killed there by Allan Hancock, the largest weighing seventy-five pounds. Others found this fish at Cape San Lucas in the spring.

There are two types of white sea-bass very similar to those killed in California waters, which are most plentiful at the head of the Gulf, although they come south at least as far as Guaymas on the mainland shore, and have been noted at Cape San Lucas. These fish are known as totuava and corvina and run as high as approximately two hundred pounds. The writers had some experience with them at Pelican Island on the mainland shore east of Tiburon, but were not particularly impressed with their fighting qualities, for although they gave a good strong fight they were quickly captured on light tackle in much shorter time than it would take to kill a yellowtail or roosterfish of the same size. The battle which they put up was much on the order of that dis-

played by the drumfish of the Atlantic coast, and on no occasion did these fish jump out of the water after being hooked. Nevertheless, they afford very fine fishing and may be secured in great quantities at certain times of the year.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

## *EXTRACTS FROM DIARY*

### *EARLY NOVEMBER, 1929*

THE run from Los Angeles harbor to Cedros (or Cerros) Island, off the coast of Lower California in Mexico, gives a total distance of three hundred and sixty knots, as "Radio" made it in almost forty-five hours, or an average speed of eight knots an hour.

The sea had been calm, the winds shifting and little aid received from the sails. The high terrain of Cedros gave beautiful color contrasts against the sky and water—vivid orange and yellow, shaded with soft blending grays, stood out from the light azure above and the rippling darker blue below.

Cedros, the Bonita Islands further seaward, and the Turtle Bay region have the fish of Southern California, but in greater quantity. Giant bass are plentiful, but not so abundant as in the early days of twenty years ago when Conn and Farnsworth, sailing south in the "Comfort" took fifteen giant bass in one day at Turtle Bay, a record chronicled by Holder.

Yellowtail abound in the district, also bonita, kelp bass and other medium and small-sized varieties. Broadbill swordfish, marlin and tuna are present in quantity when migrating, but the fish typical of Mexican tropical waters are to be found further south.

Our party, in passing Cedros, picked up yellowtail from the "Radio," the best troll being a white feather jig. Arriving at Turtle Bay an hour before dark, a boat was lowered and in a short time the anglers killed bonita and kelp bass, securing them with a Number Six automatic striking spoon.

The wind shifted to the northeast in mid-afternoon, yet the nearly land-locked harbor gave a quiet night in spite of a twenty-five mile blow. In the morning the northeast wind was still white-capping the inlet and promised a quick passage toward Magdalena Bay.

However, this was a local wind, and after an early start, "Radio" passed beyond it within ten miles. The breeze died, shifted to south, then to southwest, and finally came in with a fair sailing wind from the west.

The course led close to land, and an enchanting

panorama glided by. The sea, under the roughing of the wind, was dark blue, and the ochres, vermilions, reds, siennas, purples and drabs of the shore mountains, mostly in pastel shades, were oriented and enhanced by their setting of sea and sky.

Seventy miles below Turtle Bay birds became plentiful. A number of schools of mackerel thrashed as they surfaced, and one marlin swordfish sickle passed by—the first fin of a big game fish noted on the trip. In this district marlin are found most of the year. The "Radio" was fast approaching the northern limit of many new fish as she slipped through the quiet sea, urged on by a moderate westerly.

The log for eight hours showed an average of close to eight and a half knots, and the westerly held until sunset—a golden glory which gradually faded from an intense orange and red, combining brightest yellow near the horizon and merging into lightest apple green and blue above.

Here it is advisable to keep outside the one hundred fathom depth shown on the government chart, not only for a direct course, but on account of the slower, easier roll of deeper water.

The run from Turtle Bay to Santa Maria Bay was 223.2 knots by the log and took a fraction less than twenty-seven and one-half hours, an average speed of 8.10 plus. "Radio" logged as high as 8.88 knots with the westerly in mid-afternoon, but after midnight the light breeze was nearly dead ahead.

At daylight Cape San Lazaro was in sight. The ocean was flat calm with hardly any sea and many evidences of fish. One large marlin was passed at 6 A.M., the fish diving when near the schooner. Frigate birds circled high above, and the lower air showed many gulls. The sea itself was dotted with other birds and small snipe, while a few butterflies zigzagged by.

Twenty miles off shore schools of bait, of skipjack, of bonita and porpoise were observable frequently. The first dolphin was discovered at 9:35 o'clock A.M., fifteen miles north of Cape Lazaro. The hand troll accounted for the hooking of a number and the landing of a few skipjack, all of which were almost identical in size and weight. They averaged about twenty-two inches in length and fifteen inches in girth, running eight pounds, as against a bonita of twenty-five and one-half inches in length and

thirteen and one-half inches in girth, with the weight showing six and one-half pounds. These weights prove the inaccuracy of the Tuna Club formula for measuring various types of fish to secure poundage.

Rounding Hughes Point a little past eleven o'clock, a lovely harbor opened to view. Protected, except from the southwest, Santa Maria Bay is nearly land-locked. Cape San Lazaro, to the west, is the high land which keeps off the westerly, but the northern and eastern shores are low sand beaches.

Before reaching an anchorage in five fathoms close to the guarding western hills, the troll line straightened out and vigorous yells from everyone announced that a fish was hooked. The quickest to the line was George III., who promptly brought in our first Sierra mackerel, one of the most beautiful fish existing. Again, our white feather jig had been the troll, and unanimously, everyone insisted on this lure whenever the line went out.

The mackerel was twenty-five inches long and eleven inches in girth, weighing five and one-half pounds. This was a pound less than a bonita of same length and two and one-half pounds less than a skip-jack three inches shorter.

A notation made of the colors of this Sierra mackerel gives the following description: Back—blue-green, medium to dark, from back to lateral line apple-green to lavender, below a dull silver and silver-white with a white under-body. Small circular spots of golden bronze commence above the iridescent lateral line and extend well below it along the fish's body. Tail and upper fins are of a silver-green sheen, shaded dark gray, lower fins silver-white, shaded light gray. The head is gray around the snout; upper part iridescent green and blue. Inner eye is black, surrounded by two circles, the first yellow drab and the outer, gray-black.

After lunch, the crew put out the whaleboat launch, and the two anglers, with Farnsworth as boatman, and Chisholm in charge of photography, went fishing. Heading for the western shore of the bay, action speedily was found. The son, fishing with Tuna Club light tackle rod and 15-thread, had the initial strike—a cabrilla, which on the first hard dash, reached the rocks at the bottom in shallow water and cut the line.

The father had a strike immediately thereafter, evidently from another cabrilla, the fish breaking the

9-thread when held hard to keep him off the rocks below. New spoons and leaders were fastened to the lines and better luck followed, George III. securing a fine fish of fifty pounds after a splendid fight, while the older fisherman took one of twenty-five and another of forty-five pounds.

The cabrilla bit fast and furiously, and the sport was increased in interest by the fact that in addition to these fish, Sierra mackerel, yellowtail and a distinct type of cross-bred mackerel joined in attacking the Wilson and automatic spoons.

Along the shore the cabrilla predominated and they were sturdy, fast fighters with a first remarkably strong run, which added to their invariable habit of heading for rocks, made them difficult to handle. Apparently, most of the big ones were lost in the rocks, and the entire party were having a very exciting time. The photographer got into the game, being given heavy tackle, on which, after breaking one fish off, he secured a fine cabrilla of thirty-eight pounds.

Working toward the open sea past Hughes Point, mackerel came more in evidence, and a number were killed.

Immediately thereafter the largest fish of the day grabbed a mackerel which struck the younger angler's line and gave a good, hard fight before reaching the gaff. In addition to the common variety of cabrilla, a second kind known as "cabrilla pinta" was in evidence. The largest weighed twenty-one pounds. The ordinary type varied in color from dark brown to a golden brown. They are reported to go well over two hundred pounds. Farnsworth has seen specimens caught weighing two hundred pounds, and in all cases they fought with the one idea of tangling the line in the rocks and breaking off.

The cabrilla is a type of bass. He frequently jumps clear of the water in chasing small fish or in taking a troll, and his first rush is hard and fast, after which he resists doggedly and makes quick turns and forceful runs. He compares most favorably in fighting ability with others of the bass family, pound for pound, and is very plentiful in Mexican waters from Santa Maria Bay south.

It might be said that between Turtle Bay and Santa Maria Bay both the giant bass and cabrilla are indigenous. But few, if any, cabrilla are found at

WAHOO OR PACIFIC KINGFISH

There is no record of this fish being taken hitherto in these waters

the more northern place—practically no giant bass at the latter.

An allied species, the jewfish, appears in quantity in the Gulf but he is not often found north of Cape San Lucas on the ocean side of the Southern California peninsula.

As the launch "Static" passed Hughes Point, the various fish struck in turn, first one kind, and then another. A manta ray jumped not far off and crashed back upon the sea. Turtles of large size were swimming here and there, while several big fish leaped clear of the water, one of which Farnsworth could not identify, although he saw it nearby.

Once a marlin of average Catalina size, say about one hundred and fifty pounds, rushed a mackerel bait, and although he struck and took plenty of line from a free spool, he could not be hooked on a number six already placed through both upper and lower jaws of the mackerel. When the marlin dropped the bait, it was seized by what was most likely a cabrilla, and this fish took all the mackerel but the head.

It was now close to five o'clock, and twilight was blotting out everything but the vivid western light

in a dazzling sunset. It was high time for the "Static" to get back to her mother ship.

A count of stock retained showed four cabrilla of thirty-eight to eighty-five pounds; several smaller ones around twenty pounds, a few small yellowtail, and a number of Sierra mackerel averaging four to seven pounds, including an especially fine specimen of nine pounds, the fish being thirty-one inches in length and thirteen and three-quarter inches in girth; also a few skipjack and two rather small cross-bred mackerel.

The last mentioned are believed to be a cross between a bonita and skipjack. Their bodies are much like the skipjack and the markings are of bonita colorings. Farnsworth has never taken these mackerel anywhere but in the Santa Maria Bay locality. Another mackerel indigenous to this bay is stated to be a cross between a yellowfin tuna and a skipjack.

Santa Maria marks the commencement of the semi-tropical fishing; it needs a thorough test before it intelligently can be described, but one short afternoon's work shows its possibilities. The point to be emphasized is that within six hundred miles of South-

ern California lies fishing territory equalling old Catalina at its best.

The cabrilla is a marvelous fish. The large specimens beat us most of the time; they bite fiercely and average individuals may be killed in numbers.

In order to avoid wanton killing, our party liberated many more fish of all the varieties than were kept.

The smaller kinds guarantee wonderful sport—fishing that is beyond the ken of most American anglers. Certainly our fishermen were nonplussed, and nothing in their experience compared with this afternoon. Such experience is for the average man or party perhaps more intriguing than is the chase of the big fish, for example, Allison tuna or swordfish. Men who rave over the fish of inland or eastern seacoast waters above Florida would glory in this region, and the large ones are here for the expert big game devotee.

The charm of surprise bars very light tackle, as one never knows what will strike next, and light tackle is too small for the fish which attack the one you have hooked. A nine ounce rod slightly longer than Tuna Club dimensions and eighteen-thread will give

a chance at the big fellows, while six and nine-thread will do for mackerel, bonita, yellowtail, etc. However, if these lines are used when big fish feed a barrel of spoons will be lost in short order.

Santa Maria Bay is a wonderland for the angler, and were it not for the necessity of reaching the upper Gulf before winter, "Radio" would stay indefinitely.

### Santa Maria Bay to Cape San Lucas

A fish of some kind hit the troll just before four o'clock P.M., when we were logging close to nine knots, the speed evidently pulling the hook free. It was a small fish of from thirty to forty pounds, apparently a yellowfin tuna.

A little after that time the senior angler, while seated near the stern, saw a long, narrow form leap clear of the water and strike the white feather jig. With "Radio" logging a full eight and one-half knots, this swift, strong quarry was more than one man could handle, for when the fish had been pulled close to the quarter, it turned sideways and took line. Farnsworth added his skill and strength to the losing side, and with this additional help the battler

was turned and brought close to the schooner, where it quickly was gaffed and taken aboard.

The fight had occupied considerable time, giving opportunity to procure a gaff, and the photographer to grasp his camera. All hands exclaimed with astonishment, as a new specimen of fish flopped on the deck. It was sixty inches long, twenty-four inches in girth, and striped something on the order of a marlin—a long, lean, streamlined, vicious thing shaped like a barracuda. It tipped the beam at a strong fifty and a half pounds.

The captain, engineer and mate had all fished these waters for fifteen years and more, but not one of them had seen this variety here. Farnsworth had killed them at the Clarion Islands, six hundred miles southwest of Cape San Lucas, or approximately seven hundred miles from the scene of our capture, which indicated the fish as inhabiting this coast. The exact location was nineteen miles off the Mexican shore, sixty-seven miles south of Santa Maria Bay and about one hundred and ten miles north of Cape San Lucas.

The fish, which jumped horizontally after bait outside of Santa Maria Bay the day before, was the same shape and size, and gave the identical horizon-

tal leap. Our prize is much like the kind called kingfish in Honolulu, but different from the Florida variety of the same name. Farnsworth has seen very large specimens, which several men were unable to capture on a handline from the deck of a moving vessel, and when killed on rod and reel they are extremely fast.

This catch proved beyond doubt that fishing in these waters offers wonderful charm in unexpected happenings. The natives of Cape San Lucas, when shown the fish, said "they were caught here infrequently, but occasionally arrived in April and May in quantity."

From the picture of a wahoo, illustrated by Zane Grey, and caught by Romer Grey at Cocos Island, five hundred miles off Panama, we conclude that our fish is identical. In one of Zane Grey's books he states, "I did not know that 'wahoo' or 'peto', as this species is called in theWest Indies, was an inhabitant of the Pacific."

A little later a small dolphin took the white feather jig, and was captured. In color it was slightly lighter yellow than the ones caught in Catalina waters.

When night shut in, the wind increased, as it so

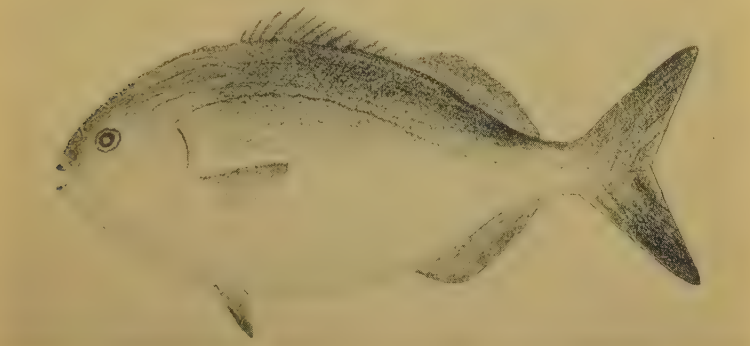
CROAKER VERRUGATO—MICROPOGON ECTENES

*Description:* This specimen of croaker was small, weighing slightly under three pounds. Pinkish-bronze color on dorsal side, which fades to lighter shades on underbody. Nose pointed, and extends forward above mouth. Dorsal fin is rather high and short, but other fins small. May be identified by lack of barbule found on chin of most species of croaker family.

*Distribution:* Ranges throughout the waters of the Pacific Coast and Mexico.

*Habits:* Seems to prefer sandy bays and inlets.

*Capture:* All members of the croaker family are best taken by still fishing near the bottom with cut bait.



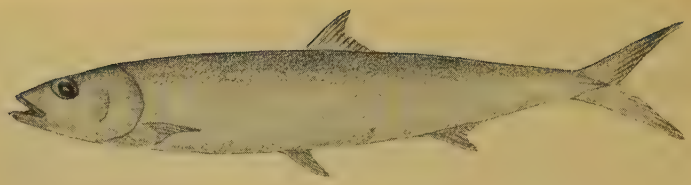
RUDDER FISH, CHOPA—KYPHOSUS ELEGANS

*Description:* The rudder fish is almost round in shape, and rather thin. Mouth and all fins except the tail small. Latter wide and forked, being fairly thick and heavy. A dusky grey shade prevails on back, and ventral side is lighter. This somber colored fish has an extremely small head.

*Distribution:* Found in tropical and semi-tropical waters.

*Habits:* Very perch-like in habits, preferring sandy bays and coves. Does not school often.

*Capture:* After vainly endeavoring to capture one of these fish on the small bass rod, it was found almost impossible to hook, and specimen taken from the "Radio" was speared.



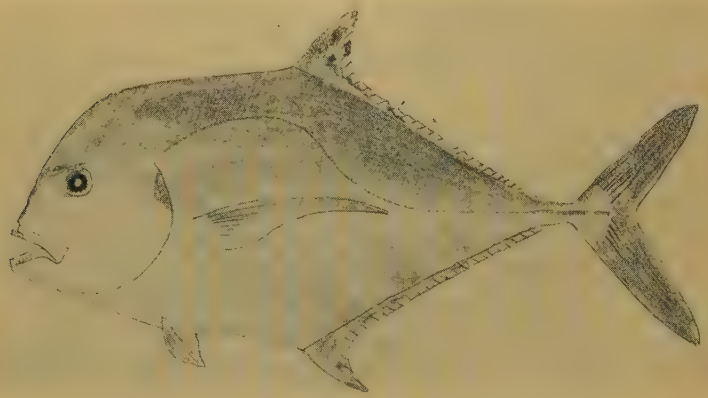
TEN POUNDER, LADYFISH, BIG EYED SCAD—ELOPS SAURUS

*Description:* Slim fighter of graceful lines, with small fins and forked tail. Dorsal fin commences about half-way back on dorsal side, and is fairly high. Pectoral is situated very low and far forward. May be distinguished from the other so-called ladyfish or bonefish (Albula vulpes) by mouth which is small with lower jaw projecting.

*Distribution:* Found in warm seas, both tropical Atlantic and Pacific.

*Habits:* Runs in schools, and seems to prefer bays and inlets close to shore.

*Capture:* Is most difficult to land due to fact that it jumps and shakes head so furiously when hooked that barb is thrown. Affords the finest of sport on light tackle, but angler must endeavor to keep a tight line at all times or quarry will escape. Fast to the extreme.



POMPANO OR PAMPANO—HYNNIS HOPKINSI

*Description:* Oval shaped and of beautiful coloring, much sought after as food. Back is of pearlish grey hue, fading to silver on belly, three dusky bands or bars on ventral side running toward head at right angles to outline of body. Lateral line very pronounced and runs from top of gill covering to tail, arching abruptly above pectoral fin. Dorsal and anal fins placed rather far back on body and spotted with black. Tail is large and forked. Very pronounced forehead and outline of head quickly slopes down from above eye.

*Distribution:* Found from California to Tropical waters.

*Habits:* Sandy bays and inlets seem to hold an attraction for the pompano.

*Capture:* Best take on cut bait by still fishing on light tackle.

seldom does after it "blows the sun down." The "Radio" seemed a little thing in a huge world of rolling, moving vastness—of great surges which chased us, threatened us and then hurled us forward, and passing under and beyond the schooner, left us in a deep valley with mountains in the form of other great whitecapped seas overtaking us.

Far ahead a bright star just above the tossing sea line deceived us into believing a ship appeared. To the west, the lights of a steamer tried to overtake us and gradually did so, though we raced it for hours, as we logged over ten knots.

The night magnified everything and filled us with a weird sense of loneliness. In reality, we rode fast and sure as we "forged downhill" with the wind and sea aiding us; a far different experience than if we had been going north uphill against the same weather.

Under present conditions there was no great amount of motion below, although we could feel each gigantic wave as it overtook us, raised our stern and then pushed us forward with increased speed before it passed beyond.

We fell asleep, intent on the thought that tomor-

row would see Cape San Lucas, our first objective point in the search for new and strange fish.

### At Cape San Lucas

A beautiful circular roadstead, open from the E.S.E. to the S.S.E., protected from other points; a curving sand beach and large sand dunes in the center, rising to higher land, which is well clothed with semi-tropical trees and backed by mountains. To the south, bold high rocks give protection and to the northeast and north, a lower rocky point with mountains beyond. The ocean surges come in from the southeast when there is a big sea outside, and the current at such times holds a vessel in the trough. Otherwise, this bay is calm and a good harbor.

The air is perceptibly warmer than at Santa Maria. The sea breeze has a softer breath without the tang of the California coast.

Away in the launch for a short exploration, the anglers found new fish at once. Needlefish leaped from the water with frequency, sometimes clearing fifteen feet of ocean, which seems a long jump for their length of two to three feet. The beautiful Sierra mackerel is the first victim, and shortly afterwards

jack (crevalle), cabrilla and red snapper are taken—all wonderful fighters and most suitable for light tackle. The same Wilson and automatic striking spoons give good results. A yellow and red minnow is best for these mackerel.

No one could ask for a more beautiful spot or for a greater diversity of reasonably-sized game fish, all close to the anchorage. The red snapper is rather a rarity in these waters in winter. He is a blazing red flame, a typical bass shape and fights like one.

Returning to "Radio" we found the Mexican custom official and two of his countrymen—also a short, choppy roll from the east which affected one of the visitors, his companion explaining, "He feel some seasick, but not too much."

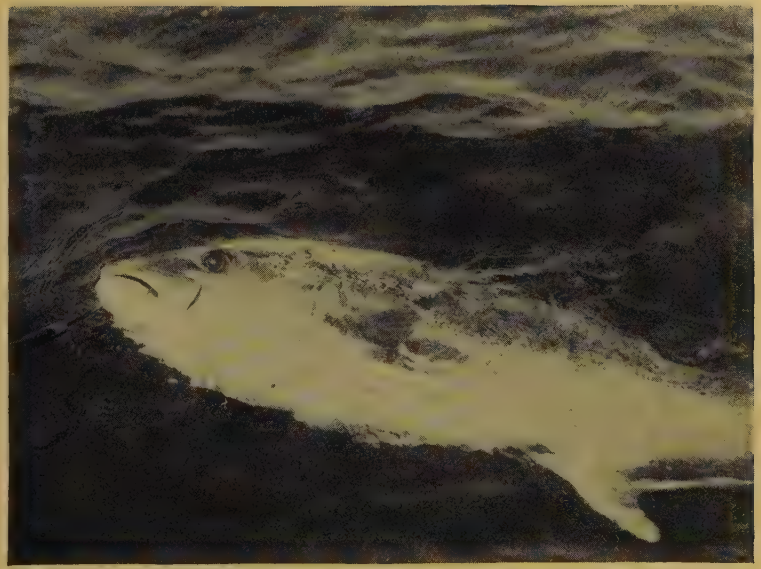
## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

## *THE TUREL DE CASTILLA*

THE "Static" serenely made her way along the shore-line of the largest island of the Tres Marietas group. Farnsworth, at the wheel, kept his eyes on the water ahead, ever watchful for indications of fish. In the stern, side by side in the twin fishing chairs, sat the anglers. Between them there had been much good natured banter as to who would get the next new fish, and each was boastful and confident that his rod would bring in the largest quarry of the day. The older man had had all the luck, although he chaffingly claimed that it was skill, in landing new and different fish on the trip, but his companion was ever hopeful, and imagined each strike something different. All he could hook were crevalle and cabrilla; it was most disheartening, especially when the other was taking some new variety of game every few minutes.

"I think your line's out further than mine," or "Where did you steal that spoon? No wonder I can't get any strikes," were common remarks.

TUREL DE CASTILLA (80½ POUNDS)
A species of Yellowtail



HARMLESS METHOD OF GAFFING TUREL WITH BARBLESS GAFF, SO THAT THE HOOK MAY BE EXTRACTED AND THE FISH RELEASED WITHOUT INJURY

Then the younger man looked at the tackle of his companion. He himself was using the regulation light outfit, substituting a twelve thread line for the specified Tuna Club nine. The other had a nine ounce tip with eighteen thread line.

"I could land all the fish in the ocean, too, if I had a telephone pole like that to pull them in with. Why don't you give the fish a chance? Anybody can catch them on a rope," he joked. "Look at my rod; I fish for sport. That last little cabrilla you got didn't even have a chance to brace himself; you just skidded him in along the surface; a fine fisherman you are."

The older angler looked at him, his dignity unruffled. "When I left the boat this morning I had a hunch that I'd need this outfit; I'm going to get a real fish today; none of these little twenty pounders."

The other started to reel in his line. "I'll give you a chance to hook him, then," he said. "There's a big manta ray up here ahead and I want to try to get a picture of him." He turned to the boatman. "Think you can get close enough to him for me to take a few shots, George?"

The huge bat-like wings of the manta were just coming into the finder of the camera when there was a great commotion in the after cockpit. The welcome cry of "Strike!" sounded above the melée, and the photographer turned in time to see the swirl of a giant fish behind the boat. The Coxe reel screamed and the line whizzed through the guides as that fish stripped it off; one hundred, two hundred, three hundred feet; would he never stop?

At last the mad pace slackened, and the frantically "pumping" angler was able to retrieve most of the line. As he paused a moment for breath, he marvelled, "What a run that was!"

The younger man turned to him, "Any idea what it is? He acts big; be careful 'cause we want that fish."

"I don't know; couldn't see him very well but he's a good one," replied the angler.

"Acts like a tuna or big yellowtail," said Farnsworth.

The fish headed for the open sea and "Static" followed. Those on board maintained a grim silence; angler and boatman were too much engrossed in

their work for speech, and the spectator was busy with his camera. Although the angler "laid back" as much as he dared on his rod, which in reality was hardly large enough for such game, in spite of all previous comments, he was unable to bring the fish close enough for identification. The latter made many short, powerful runs, which taxed to the utmost the strength of the tackle, and brought misgivings to the minds of the fishermen, but he could not be forced near the boat. Speculations were made as to the identity of the quarry. Farnsworth still maintained that it was a tuna, the others knew only that it was large. One of the interesting features of fishing in Mexican waters is the fact that an angler never can tell just what he will hook next, and anticipation is all the more keen for this reason.

After a quarter of an hour had passed the fish commenced to weaken. He began to circle under the boat, and those on board knew that he nearly was beaten. Foot by foot, the angler gained line as the fish came closer. The others cautioned him to be careful, it would not do to lose it now.

"Take it easy," they advised. "Don't work him too hard. We've got to land this fish."

The younger angler looked down into the water.

"I can see him!" he shouted. "He's a giant crevalle! No he isn't, he looks red! He's over on his side."

Slowly the leader reached the rod tip, and Farnsworth, gaff in hand, stood ready. His hands closed on the wire, and the gaff was slipped in place. The others looked over the side; then together they helped pull the fish aboard. It was a new specimen and a beauty, and they estimated its weight at slightly under the hundred pound mark.

"What is it, George?" asked the fortunate rodman.

"I've seen them before, but never this large," said the boatman. "They belong to the yellowtail species, I think."

In truth the fish did resemble a great yellowtail. It was considerably more chunky, however, but the fins and general appearance classified it as one of this family. The back was a beautiful bronze hue, which faded into silver on the belly, and the whole fish gleamed in the sunlight with a metallic sheen. The fins and tail were of the same coloring, but lighter.

The beam scales on the schooner registered the weight of the fish as 80½ pounds. It is reported that turel run to slightly over one hundred pounds.*

* On her spring trip "Radio" found many turel at Cape San Lucas—the average over forty pounds, the largest eighty-two and one-half.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

## *OFF SHORE*

THE wind, light and baffling all day, now came dead ahead. As twilight deepened, "Radio" pitched into a head sea and made slow progress—a full two points off her course. Not far away, the dim shape of the mainland near Roque Point grew more indistinct with each moment, as heavy clouds shut in from beyond and above, while lack of stars and moon promised a dark night for the passage between Cedros and the peninsula coast, should the captain elect to try it, in a hope that the breeze might shift to the east of north.

"It's a gamble," said the skipper, "unless we strike a bad northwester tomorrow or the next morning, our best bet is to keep off shore, heading for Guadalupe, and catch a westerly from there past Clemente to San Pedro breakwater." "Fair enough!" replied the anglers, "we would like to see the island anyhow." So the schooner laid her course just to the north of Guadalupe, and with a "rapt full," and eased sheets increased her speed and rose and fell more easily as she took the seas obliquely.

At 9:30 P.M., the wind shifted to east of north, coming in strong gusts with a rising sea. The engine was shut off. The wind increased until eleven P.M. when it fell and eventually died, leaving the ship to roll in a sloppy swell. Used engine until 3 A.M. when the breeze freshened, and it was rough by 7:30 A.M. Logging eight to eight and one-half knots all morning. At noon, three hundred and eighty knots from San Pedro breakwater if wind holds, three hundred and fifty-five knots on a straight course. Very high barometer. Query: Does this bring northeast desert wind, which will put us almost dead to leeward of our home port? Perish such a thought!

Passing floating kelp, the first noted since leaving home. Some seaweed at Santa Maria, but neither at the Cape, and very little of the latter in the Gulf. None of the former.

At 2 P.M. logging eight. Wind stiff north northwest and short breaking seas on top of the long, heavy swells. Wind peters out with sunset, and a reasonably smooth night follows.

Up for a red sunrise with Guadalupe Island bearing south southeast, its 4,500-foot peak clearly outlined in the morning light. Barometer high.

Breeze increased until 8:30 A.M.—log reads four hundred forty-two knots since leaving Santa Maria Christmas night, an average of one hundred eighty miles per day (over two hundred land miles) or one hundred and sixty knots toward objective. Many Catalina porpoises traveling across the course. Took the port tack after lunch, giving her five points, whereupon the wind promptly started to shift and gradually came dead ahead. An overcast sky opening above rapidly. Barometer up to 30.20 and dropped in two hours to 30.08. Threatening weather. Wind came in from same old north northwest to north by west after supper. The rails and cabinhouse are damp. Everything promised a shift to the westerly, and all hands in the cabin party went below to play dominoes.

It was not long before the flapping of the mainsail advised of some change. On deck it was found the wind had shifted to northeast. The woodwork, formerly so wet, was now dry as a bone. One could taste the dust in the air, and it looked like a heavy, northeast desert blow. But contrary to all prediction, the wind flattened out. Apparently, the course had been just far enough at sea to work in a zone be-

tween the northeast wind from the shore and the westerly trade further outside. There had been a heavy desert wind on the mainland, and the dust brought to sea by its force reached well over one hundred miles from shore.

Followed the smoothest night since leaving the Cape. At sunrise, next morning, there was Clemente close at hand off the port bow. "Radio" passed the east end reef and headed for Seal Rocks, after which breakfast was relished. Coming on deck, the water seemed flat. It was like a summer's day, this twenty-ninth of December. Catalina lay ahead clearly defined in its ocean setting, while to starboard a shimmering breeze commenced to darken the water. It seemed no time at all till the schooner passed Pebbly Beach and megaphoned one of the Wrigley boats to ask Secretary West at the Tuna Club to phone she should anchor inside the breakwater early in the afternoon and everyone go ashore before night.

From the standpoint of number of varieties of fish and of small to medium size catches, the trip had been a great success. There were colored drawings of over forty different fish, and much valuable information and more than thirty specimens for the

Los Angeles Museum. The list included the first recorded wahoo taken close to the Mexican mainland, also a type of runner christened "Rainbow Yellowtail," and several other kinds, of which the Museum people had no data. One seabass was new to them, also. Herewith is list of fish taken:

| | |
|---|---|
| Bonita | Same as caught at Catalina |
| Cross-bred Mackerel | Found near Santa Maria Bay (Bonita-Skipjack) |
| Cross-bred Mackerel | Found in Gulf and South Mexican coast region (Bonita-Yellowfin-Tuna) |
| Skipjack | Same as California variety |
| Mexican Bonita | South Mexican coast (Bullet) |
| Cross-bred Mackerel | South Mexican coast (Skipjack-Yellowfin-Tuna) |
| Cabrilla (Common) | From Santa Maria South in Gulf and South Mexican Coast |
| Cabrilla Pinta | do. |
| Cabrilla Colorado | Rare. Found near Cape and Ceralbo Islands |
| Cabrilla Dorado | do. |
| Cabrilla Baccalado | Banderas Bay |
| Yellow Sheepshead | Gulf and South Mexican coast |
| Red Sheepshead | Lower Gulf |
| Kelp Rock Bass | Turtle Bay only; same as California variety |
| Red Fin Bass | Ypala and South |
| Cabrilla Sculpin | Tiburon to Banderas |

LOS ANGELES
LOWER CALIFORNIA
TIBURON I
KINO PT.
CEDROS I
TURTLE BAY
GUAYMAS
CARMEN I
S. JOSE I
STA MARIA BAY
MAGDALENA BAY
CERALBO I
MAZATLAN
CAPE SAN LUCAS
BANDERAS BAY
CAPE CORRIENTES
MANZANILLO
CRUISE OF THE "RADIO"
IN
MEXICAN WATERS
1929

"RADIO"

| | |
|---|---|
| Harbor Perch | Manzanillo |
| Pargo | From Mazatlan south |
| Red Snapper | Cape and South coast |
| Crevalle | Cape and South Mexican coast |
| White Seabass (Totuava) | Head of Gulf. Migrates south to Guaymas. Same as California Bass |
| Mexican White Seabass (Corvina) | do. do. do. |
| Yellowtail | Mexican line to Cape and Gulf |
| Rainbow Yellowtail (A type of Runner) | Very rare. No record of this fish. Taken at Ceralbo Island |
| Mexican Yellowtail (Turel de Castilla) | Banderas Bay, Cape San Lucas in Spring. Noted at Galapagos by Hancock |
| Sierra Mackerel | Santa Maria, South and Gulf |
| Needlefish | do. |
| Ladyfish (Bonefish) | Magdalena Bay. Cape. Lower Gulf |
| Pompano | Banderas and South |
| Dolphin | Same as California variety. West coast to Carmen Island in Gulf and South coast |
| Roosterfish | Cape. North to Carmen Island and South Mexican coast |
| Yellowfin Tuna | West coast. Gulf. Southern coast |
| Kingfish (Wahoo) | Rare fish in Mexican waters. Caught by Zane Grey at Cocos Island and found at Clarion and Socorro |

| | |
|---|---|
| Red Perch | Cape San Lucas |
| Sea Porcupine Fish | do. |
| Parrot Fish | do. |
| Barracuda | West coast. Almost same as California fish |
| Ratfish | Magdalena Bay |
| Croaker | do. |
| Lizard Fish | Santa Maria |
| Seahorse | Magdalena Bay |
| Angelfish | Over large area |
| Surgeon Fish | Cape |

We had learned to love the Mexican coast and its fishes, but we had killed no large game—no big tuna, no black marlin, no sailfish. For this reason "Radio" is being refitted and will leave for the Cape the first week in April, hoping to concentrate on big game and to return in time to compete in the Tuna Club 1930 Tournament, and possibly to add a chapter to this record.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

## *WHAT CONSTITUTES GAME FISHING*

LOYALTY to our ideals, and loyalty to those things we hold dear is greatly to be commended. It is natural and right. In our sports we properly may show loyalty, but this quality is not egotism and does not include the belittling of some other thing loved by a neighbor, or that one's particular choice is finer than any or all others.

In games and in sports we are prone to think our own special pastime or pursuit is superior to the rest. This leads to futile arguments, misunderstandings, and bickerings. Especially is this unnecessary where the one condemning is not an expert concerning the thing condemned. In America there are many types of fishing. It is the opinion of the writers that all are in one way or another game fishing, provided the followers pursue the chase with sportsmanship. Let any man choose his preferred hobby, be it fishing, shooting or what-not, but if a true sportsman, he will not exalt such to the detriment of the other fellow's selection.

It is difficult to determine which characteristics

needed in any effort are most to be recommended. For example, those who kill small animals, birds or fishes in safety, should not be looked down upon by others who capture or slay large and dangerous adversaries under more or less hazardous conditions. Every sport requires virtues of one kind or another, be it patience, courage, skill or strategy. Who can say that one quality is finer than the others? Most certainly it may be more difficult for "A" to kill tigers, but more impossible for "B" to fly an aeroplane, or for "C" to play chess. Do we not all choose the thing which intrigues us most, be it because we excel in it or for the reason that it is thrust upon us by environment, or for some cause commendable to our desires? The broadminded course is to admit the skill and technique of varied interests. Otherwise it is much like the old conundrum: "What is a mut?" with its answer, "The other man's dog."

The writers have tried their share of angling, shooting and varied sports, and they find in some sources, be they letters from abroad or opinions close at home, that this "knocking" of any particular interest by a person who prefers something else, is often encountered.

Arguments condemning big game fishing are oft repeated, and might be quoted in the following order of popularity:

"IT is just brute strength. There is no skill in fighting a big fish."

"All you do is troll a bait until some fish is idiot enough to take it."

"I do not like the ocean. The lakes and streams are much more beautiful."

Often these sentences are uttered by those who know little of the lure of big game or of the sea.

Perhaps answers to these opinions may clarify the situation for those who do not know:

Replying to the first and second: The Tuna Club has kept records for thirty-two years, during which time many men from different parts of the world have tried for membership buttons, with the following results taken from the 1929 Tuna Club Year Book:

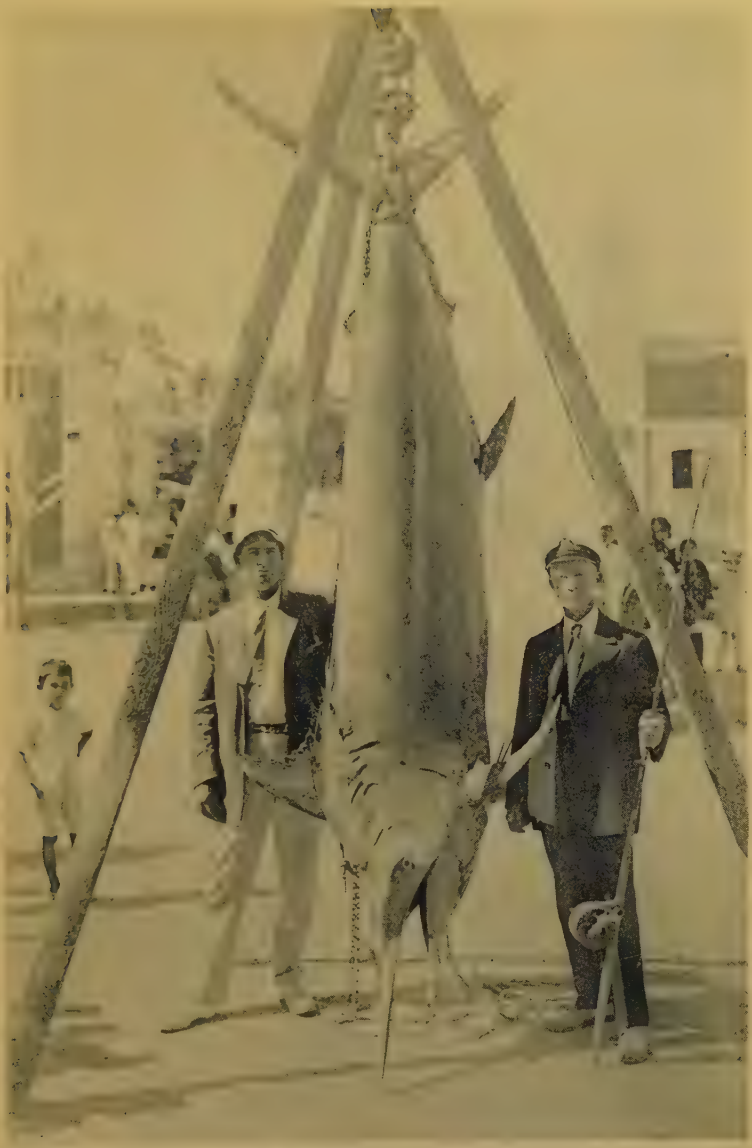
157 Men took a Blue Button Tuna on heavy tackle (An average of five a year).
45 Men took a Red Button Tuna on light tackle.
33 Men took a White Button Broadbill on heavy tackle.
1 Man took a Purple Button Broadbill on light tackle.
71 Men took a Gold Button Marlin on heavy tackle.

13 Men took a Green Button Marlin on light tackle.
1 Man took a Marlin Swordfish on three-six tackle, which is a rod six feet long weighing six ounces and a 6-thread line, thereby winning a specially voted Tuna Club medal and the Southern California Tuna Club medal. The latter medal was put up for the first to do this.

If any other fishing can show a record over this length of time where so many have tried with correspondingly small results this would prove an equal necessity for skill and other virtues.

As to brute strength, it is much like a big, strong man trying to drive a golf ball the first time. Not one but many men possessing brute strength have tried Tuna Club tackle the first time with unfortunate results.

The difficulty of satisfactorily flying a kite for tuna is something which only a few have mastered, and the finding of tuna is an art in itself. Broadbill are in the writers' experience the most difficult fish to lure. Sometimes it takes days or even weeks to find them, after which perhaps one in fifteen or twenty will take a bait. Statistics show that if one in three to five are hooked, the angler is fortunate. Perhaps one out of three which are hooked is landed.



RECORD BLACK MARLIN SWORDFISH TAKEN BY MR. WILLETS J. HOLE AT CAPE SAN LUCAS
WEIGHT 509 LBS.

A LARGE RED SNAPPER CAUGHT AT THE CAPE

One of the writers killed two broadbill in ten years. The other lost the first thirteen battles after hooking the fish, one losing struggle lasting seven hours, and the victorious fight taking over five hours.

Light tackle tuna and marlin show by their records the difficulty of their capture.

As to the last quotation, why blame any person for preferring the ocean to lakes and streams? Both are nature. It is purely a case of personal opinion, although very often, upon questioning, it is discovered that the inland enthusiast is not a good sailor.

To take the big game of the sea there are certain requirements for those who capture them with rod and reel. Far be it from us even to hint that success in this field needs more sportsmanship than in any other.

As noted before, the generous thing to do is to admit that each and every method of fishing necessitates sportsmanship if it is followed in a proper manner.

The Tuna Club believes standardized tackle and rules are fairer to the fish, avoid waste, and put every angler on an even footing.

We love the lure of lakes and streams—we love the mystery of the sea.

Here's to a tight line for every angler, no matter where he angles or the size and type of his quarry.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

## *THE LATEST INFORMATION*

EARLY in April the "Radio" with the anglers and Captain Farnsworth made a second journey to Cape San Lucas for the purpose of securing additional information for this volume.

They put out into a heavy northwest wind, and unfortunately, as the mainsail was hoisted in quite a rough sea, the man in charge of the throat halyards put the force of the electric winch on this rope when the jaws of the gaff had reached their proper position, with the result that the throat halyards parted. It was necessary to return a short distance to the shipyard near Los Angeles and have the jaws of the gaff repaired. This operation consumed six hours. The "Radio" again put to sea and proceeded southward with a strong northwest breeze aiding her.

The next morning, about sixty miles off the Mexican coast, somewhat below the American line, trouble developed in the forward cylinder of the Diesel engine. It was necessary to shut down to ascertain the difficulty.

"Radio" continued on her way in a lumpy sea in a light wind, the boat rolling and tossing as she made slow progress. It was found that a sand hole had developed in the wall of the No. 1 cylinder, the sand itself having worked inside and pitting wall and piston to such an extent as to heat the cylinder and necessitate stopping. The engine was taken down so the piston could be removed, and in a tossing sea the engineer and his assistant, aided by Captain Farnsworth, rigged a block and tackle above the engine and hauled out the heavy piston. Several hours' time was needed to grind off the pitted sand by use of an emery stone, after which the piston was replaced in the cylinder. Various connections were made, the engine put together as before the accident, and after twelve hours of hard work the "Radio" was again on her way to Cape San Lucas.

The balance of the trip was without incident, except that strong, overtaking winds aided the boat in the last hundred miles. On reaching the Cape, a number of fishing boats were found taking shelter from the northwest winds, which, they informed the party, had blown without cessation since the first of the month, rendering it extremely difficult for

them to fish with success. In addition to this, there had been very few tuna sighted, and those which had been taken were not over a hundred pounds.

As the "Radio" reached the Cape, the Diesel yacht "Haida," owned by Major Max Fleischmann of Santa Barbara, which had been cruising in Mexican waters, was getting under way and leaving for the north. Afterwards it was learned that the "Haida" had spent a few days at the Cape, and on account of the heavy seas and stormy weather, had been unable to enjoy very much fishing. Later it was ascertained that on her trip she had secured a few marlin swordfish below Cape Corrientes and encountered a number of them at Ceralbo Island, but the largest of these weighed less than two hundred pounds. It is possible that the marlin encountered by the "Haida" were of the same migration that had passed Catalina during the summer of 1929, as they corresponded in size to the California visitation.

The "Radio" remained for twelve days at the Cape, during all of which the anglers were hampered by extremely heavy northwest winds. At times the force of the wind increased to that of a gale, and seldom was the velocity less than twenty miles per

hour, while occasionally it rose close to fifty. This continued to impede the work of the commercial fishermen, and as many as twenty-five net and live-bait boats were anchored for refuge at the Cape. From information received through the captains of these vessels, it was discovered that severe weather had been experienced by boats in the Gulf of California, and that one large outfit had been storm-bound and unable to go south for over ten days.

During their stay the anglers found the Cape infested by great numbers of hammerhead sharks. While not of large size, they were most annoying and constantly attacked the bait put over when fishing for marlin. These brutes ran from six to eight feet in length. When they crossed the "scent" or "trail" made by the trolling mackerel bait, they followed it just as a hound would follow the trail of a rabbit, and when another shark saw the first one hunting for food, he joined in and also picked up the scent.

No marlin were seen and only one school of tuna of any size located, and these did not strike the bait. While there was no fishing at the Cape for tuna or marlin, either before the arrival of the "Radio" party

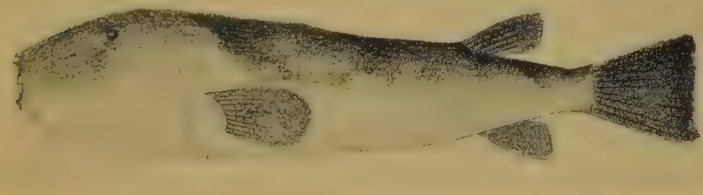
PORCUPINE FISH—DIODON HYSTRIX

*Description:* This peculiarly shaped fish is covered with hard sharp spines from head to tail. On the forehead they are grouped together in an almost comb-like arrangement. The fins are small, and protrude from, rather than form a part of, the body. The mouth is small and fleshy. A dark mottled brown is the color of this fish.

*Distribution:* It is found in warm waters from Cape San Lucas southward to Panama.

*Habits:* The porcupine fish seems to live around the rocks and has habits much the same as the members of the sculpin family.

*Capture:* It may be taken on cut bait, but is of little use except as a curiosity.



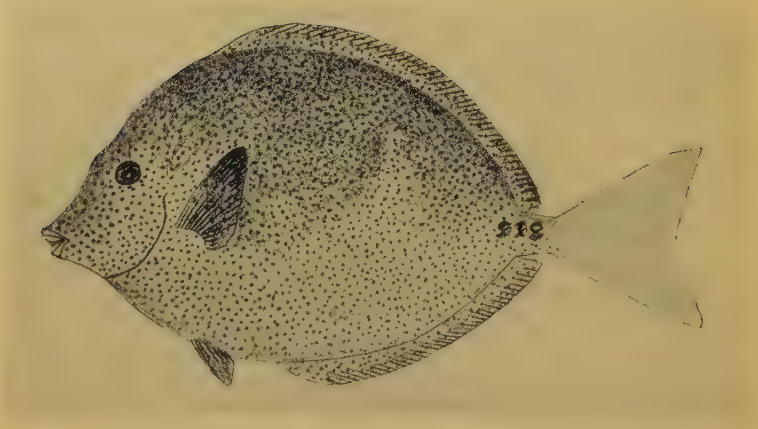
BALLOON FISH—SPHAEROIDES ANNULATUS POLITUS

*Description:* The balloon fish is a sluggish, ungainly looking creature which inflates his body into a ball when captured. He is of a mottled brownish hue on the back with lighter underparts. The head is large and the teeth greatly resemble those of a rat. The whole body is of a soft, fleshy constituency which yields to the touch.

*Distribution:* From the Pacific Coast to the tropics.

*Habits:* Rocks and sheltered spots seem to hold an attraction for this specie.

*Capture:* It has little value except as a curiosity, but may be taken on cut bait among the rocks.



SURGEON FISH—XESURUS PUNCTATUS

*Description:* An almost oval shaped fish with extremely small mouth. Color gray, being dusky on back and lighter on belly. Covered with small black spots, which appear on all fins except tail. Dorsal and anal fins are of uniform size throughout, and are rather short. Pectoral and ventral fins small, as is the head. Three caudal peduncles of wart-like structure where tail joins body. In contrast to the rest of fish, tail is of vivid lemon yellow, without shading.

*Distribution:* Found from Cape San Lucas south along Mexican coast.

*Habits:* Sandy bottoms near the shore of bays seem to be the habitat of the surgeon fish.

*Capture:* Has little value except as a curiosity, but may be taken on cut bait. Small mouth makes him extremely hard to hook, and light tackle is necessary.

or thereafter, as ascertained from an expedition this year made by W. J. Hole in his Diesel boat, "Samona," there was very fine yellowtail fishing, plenty of Sierra mackerel up to twelve pounds in weight, and a remarkable run of turel.

It was possible to kill as many of the latter as one desired, about the rocks near the southwestern end of the Cape promontory, but the water was extremely rough and at times, dangerous. In fact, it was learned that the Hole expedition was unable to go outside of the Cape at any time.

Looking back on their trips, the anglers feel that the weather conditions which they encountered throughout the Gulf, at the Cape, and even further north, were extremely bad, and that using the launch outside not only was unsatisfactory, but at intervals even extremely hazardous. The sharks which infested Cape San Lucas during the last stay of the "Radio" constituted a further drawback.

The largest turel caught by our party weighed 82½ pounds, the average being much less than this but all those taken exceeding 25 pounds in weight. The yellowtail were smaller, but in greater numbers, and the fishing offered by these two varieties was

most wonderful in every way. It was found impossible to stop turel with either "three-six" or light tackle, and the necessity of using 9-ounce rod and 18-thread line in order to have an even chance of keeping these fish from reaching the rocks and breaking the line soon became apparent.

It took the "Radio" twelve days to beat her way north from the Cape to Los Angeles. She constantly fought heavy northwest winds, on one occasion being forced to heave to nine hours in a heavy sea, when the wind blew well over fifty miles per hour and the spindrift flew fast and high.

Similar conditions were encountered by the "Black Swan," also by the "Norconian." At one time, under the lee of Cedros Island, the "Radio" dragged her hook four times in one afternoon, although she had eighty-five fathoms of heavy chain cable and a five-hundred pound navy anchor.

On the way north, the party stopped for shelter in Turtle Bay, where there was no fishing of any kind. Here an abalone factory is taking out twenty tons of abalones per day, thus insuring destruction of this shellfish on the Mexican coast, as already

it has been virtually eliminated by unwise operations in California waters.

At Cedros Island there were few bass and almost no yellowtail. It is evident that net and live-bait boats are taking their toll of indigenous fish in Mexican waters as is the case further north on the American coast.

In fact, unless something is done to curb the present commercial fishing, the time soon will come when there will be no smaller fish. The deplorable part of the situation is that sardines and other bait are being netted in huge quantities in the south, as well as in California waters, and the large fish of migratory habits must follow these fry to secure food.

Different conservation interests in California have endeavored to have various measures passed to protect the fish of our lakes and streams, migratory wild fowl, indigenous feathered game and ocean fish, but so far their efforts have been of little avail. It seems almost impossible to secure such protection from the governing bodies of the Golden State.

As this book goes to press, there is a movement afoot with the support of Senator Young, in which

it is proposed to place on the ballot for vote, a measure whereby fish and game commissioners will be appointed with full power to act and protect the wild life of the state, both on land and waterways, and in the ocean.

This is not a measure favoring anglers or aiding any one class in its pleasure or in its vocation. It is rather, a wise, well taken stand to conserve wild life of all kinds in California for the future natural wealth of the state.

Commercial fishing interests are most important and should be fostered where possible, but when such interests act without any restriction and endanger the future of a natural resource, means must be taken to control such an industry. Otherwise, not only is the industry itself eliminated, but a great natural wealth irrevocably lost.

Pennsylvania and other eastern states have been successful in re-establishing the wild life which had been greatly decimated by unwise shooting or fishing by varied interests, and the people of California would do well to consider the legacy which they should hand down to posterity, by protecting in a proper manner the wonderful heritage of marine

life, wild game in fur and feather, and trout and other food and game fish of its inland lakes and streams. Without such measures, all will suffer by the imprudent destruction, which at the present time is legal.

It would seem wise in considering this proposition to limit the catches of anglers in ocean, stream or inland waters as well as to restrict commercial fishermen. No one class should have the advantage.

A matter which is particularly disconcerting to lovers of wild life is that of swordfish harpooning. While this practice has been indulged in for many years on the Atlantic seaboard without noticeable reduction in the number of the game, a different condition exists on the Pacific coast. In the west, swordfish use but few lanes of travel in their migrations northward from Mexican waters, and it is comparatively easy for the harpooners to follow up these lanes and destroy practically all the fish.

In the summer of 1928 twenty-nine broadbill swordfish were taken by anglers. Harpooning began and the numbers thus killed ran into many hundreds. The next year saw but two landed on rod and reel with no captures to date in 1930. These figures are

accurate and would tend to prove that through the harpooning of this monarch of our ocean fish it is in danger of extermination.

After having made a study of California fishing during the ten years in which they have scouted the channel, and having had long talks with men who constantly have been in touch with big game fishing since its start at Catalina years ago, the writers feel they cannot too forcefully emphasize the necessity of conservation.

LOS ANGELES MUSEUM
EXPOSITION PARK

# *APPENDIX*

## *OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS*

The records for Southern California waters which follow are compiled from all available data, and not restricted to Tuna Club statistics.

The first fish, the largest fish and the largest fish killed by a lady angler are listed. If the record fish of either man or woman was taken prior to 1919, there is added as a matter of reference, the largest fish taken after that time, which is quoted as being killed in recent years.

### *Heavy Tackle Tuna*

First season's record taken by founder of Tuna Club, Dr. C. F. Holder, in 1898. Weight 183 pounds.

Largest recorded, taken by Colonel C. P. Morehouse, in 1899. Weight 251 pounds.

Largest captured by lady angler, taken by Mrs. E. N. Dickerson, in 1901. Weight 216 pounds.

Largest recorded in recent years, taken by Howard S. Dudley, in 1921. Weight 198½ pounds.

Largest killed by lady angler in recent years, taken by Mrs. Keith Spalding, in 1920. Weight 165½ pounds.

Greatest number of sizable tuna taken in one day was recorded in 1926 by R. C. Mankowski, with a total of thirteen fish weighing 1,082¾ pounds, an average of 83⅓ pounds per fish.

Greatest number of sizable tuna taken in two consecu-

tive days was recorded in 1926 by Geo. C. Thomas, 3rd, on July 25th and 26th. The first day eleven tuna were boated, which weighed 1,051 pounds, an average of 95½ pounds; the second day nine tuna were boated which weighed 887 pounds, an average of 98½ pounds. Total for two days, 1,938 pounds for twenty tuna, an average of 96⁹⁄₁₀ pounds per tuna.

### *Light Tackle Tuna*

First recorded taken by A. J. Eddy, in 1906. Weight 60 pounds.

Largest recorded taken by James W. Jump, in 1919. Weight 145½ pounds. (World's record on light tackle.)

Largest killed by lady angler, taken by Mrs. Keith Spalding, in 1922. Weight 105 pounds.

### *Three-six Tuna*

First and record taken by James W. Jump, in 1917. Weight 57 pounds.

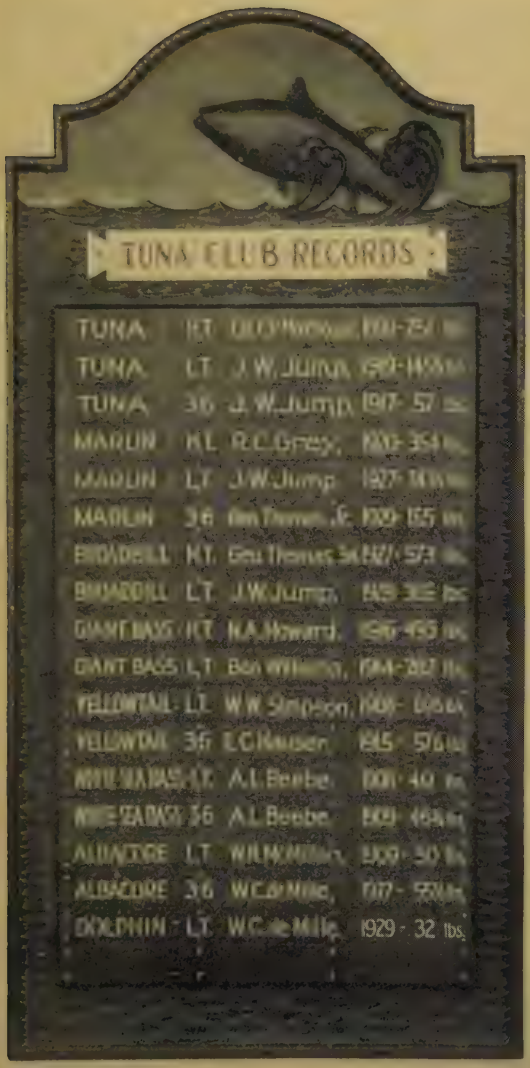
Largest recorded in recent years taken in 1926 by Thomas McD. Potter. Weight 31 pounds.

### *Heavy Tackle Marlin*

First recorded taken by Edward Llewellyn in 1903. Weight 125 pounds.

Largest recorded taken by J. A. Coxe, in 1920. Weight 372 pounds.

Largest killed by lady angler, taken by Mrs. Marshall Field, in 1919. Weight 225 pounds.




THE OFFICIAL RECORD-BOARD OF THE TUNA CLUB

J. W. JUMP'S BIG MARLIN ON LIGHT TACKLE

J. W. JUMP'S 145½ LB. TUNA ON LIGHT TACKLE

Greatest number of marlin recorded as taken in one day from one boat on heavy tackle, were killed during 1919, with a total of seven marlin, as follows: Harry W. Adams, 4 marlin; L. G. Murphy, 3 marlin.

### *Light Tackle Marlin*

First recorded and largest killed by lady angler, taken by Mrs. Winifred Pharazyn, in 1913. Weight 164 pounds.

Largest recorded taken by James W. Jump, in 1927. Weight 343½ pounds. (World's record on light tackle.)

Largest killed by lady angler in recent years, taken by Mrs. L. P. Streeter, in 1924. Weight 124 pounds.

Greatest number of marlin recorded as taken in one day on light tackle were killed during 1917 by James W. Jump, with a total of four marlin, weighing 185, 158, 155 and 138 pounds. On the same day from the same boat, Robert Jump killed two marlin on heavy tackle, weighing 220 and 175 pounds.

### *Three-Six Marlin*

First and only fish recorded taken by George C. Thomas, Jr., in 1929. Weight 155 pounds. (World's record on three-six tackle for any game fish.)

### *Heavy Tackle Broadbill*

First recorded, taken by W. C. Boschen, in 1913. Weight 355 pounds.

Largest and only fish ever killed by lady angler, taken by Mrs. Keith Spalding, in 1921. Weight 426 pounds.

First recorded of over 500 pounds, taken by Harry J. Mallen, in 1924. Weight 528 pounds.

Largest recorded, taken by George C. Thomas, 3rd, in 1927. Weight 573 pounds. (World's record on regulation heavy tackle for any game fish.)

*Light Tackle Broadbill*

First recorded taken by James W. Jump, in 1927. Weight 314½ pounds.

Largest recorded taken by James W. Jump, in 1928. Weight 365 pounds. (World's record on light tackle. To date, no other angler has taken light tackle broadbill.)

*Extra Heavy Tackle Broadbill*

(39-thread line—about 20-oz. Tip)

Largest taken by R. C. Grey, in 1926. Weight 588 pounds.

*Heavy Tackle Giant Bass*

First recorded taken by F. V. Rider, in 1898. Weight 327 pounds.

Largest recorded taken by Nelson A. Howard, in 1916. Weight 493 pounds.

Largest recorded in recent years taken in 1926 by Thomas Jr., in 1921. Weight 360 pounds.

*Light Tackle Giant Bass*

First recorded taken by E. H. Brewster, in 1906. Weight 188¼ pounds.

Largest recorded taken by Ben Williams, in 1914. Weight 282 pounds.

Largest recorded in recent years, taken by Elmer Latz, in 1929. Weight 326 pounds.

*Light Tackle Yellowtail*

First recorded taken by A. A. Carraher, in 1906. Weight 38½ pounds.

Largest recorded taken by W. W. Simpson, in 1908. Weight 60½ pounds.

Largest killed by lady angler, taken by Mrs. Anna Bailey, in 1918. Weight 42½ pounds.

Largest recorded in recent years, taken by H. B. Van Dien, in 1927. Weight 30¾ pounds.

*Three-six Yellowtail*

First recorded taken by C. G. Conn, in winter 1909-10. Weight 40½ pounds.

Largest recorded taken by E. C. Hauser, in 1915. Weight 57½ pounds.

Largest recorded in recent years, taken by W. C. deMille, in 1928. Weight 22½ pounds.

*Light Tackle Dolphin*

Largest recorded taken by W. C. deMille, in 1929. Weight 32 pounds.

Largest killed by lady angler, taken by Miss Margaret Jane Mattinson, in 1929. Weight 25 pounds.

Greatest number of Dolphin killed in one day on light

tackle, were seven fish, taken by Miss Margaret Jane Mattinson, (thirteen years of age), September 10, 1929, weighing between 22 and 25 pounds apiece.

*Light Tackle White Sea Bass*

First recorded taken by A. L. Beebe, 1906. Weight 34 pounds.

Largest recorded taken by Mrs. E. H. Brewster, in 1907. Weight 53 pounds.

Largest recorded in recent years, taken by J. A. Tufts, in 1921. Weight 46½ pounds.

Largest killed by lady angler in recent years, taken by Mrs. R. C. Cavallera, in 1927. Weight 27½ pounds.

*Three-six White Sea Bass*

First and largest recorded, taken by A. L. Beebe, in 1909. Weight 46¾ pounds.

Largest recorded in recent years, taken by W. C. deMille, in 1927. Weight 34¼ pounds.

*Light Tackle Albacore*

First recorded taken by G. J. Frickman, in 1906. Weight 38¾ pounds.

Largest recorded taken by Frank Kelley, in winter 1911-12. Weight 66¼ pounds.

Largest killed by lady angler, taken by Miss Lee M. Dixie, in 1927. Weight 55¼ pounds.

Largest recorded in recent years, taken by L. P. Streeter, in 1925. Weight 46½ pounds.

*Three-six Albacore*

Largest recorded taken by W. C. deMille, in 1927. Weight 55½ pounds.

The records for Mexican waters are difficult to list with exactness, because some expeditions have not weighed their catches, and others have published no poundage.

Mr. and Mrs. Keith Spalding have killed a number of large Allison and yellowfin tuna. They also have taken large marlin and sailfish. Harry J. Mallen, with Wm. Clover as boatman, has secured a number of large tuna and marlin. In addition to this, other expeditions have killed big tuna, marlin and sailfish in Mexican waters.

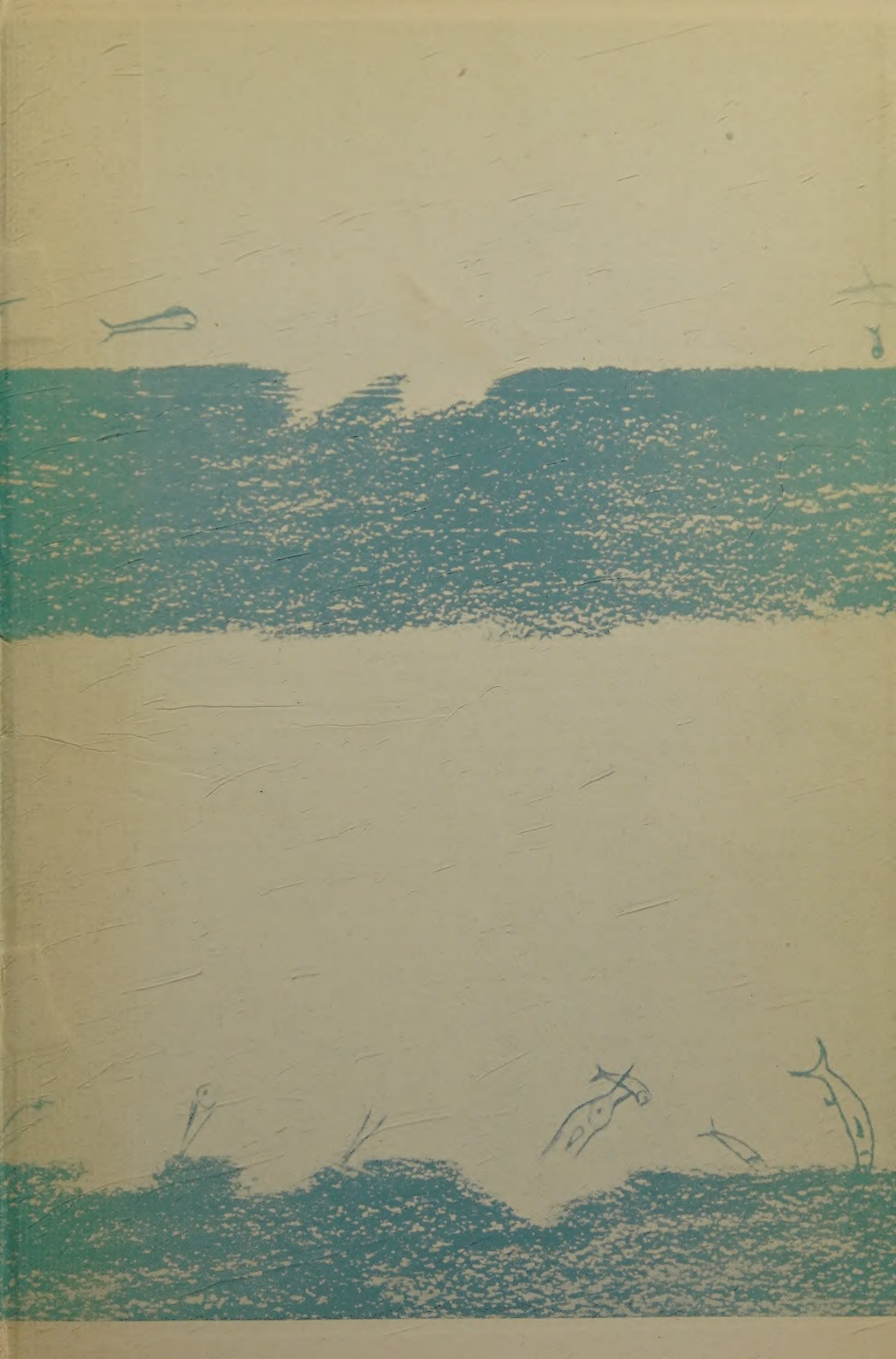
Record data is therefore restricted to known statistics of large fish.

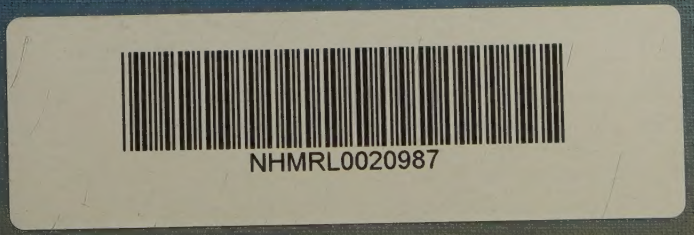
Largest Marlin, taken by W. J. Hole. Weight 509 pounds.

Largest Sailfish, taken by W. I. Hollingsworth. Weight 165 pounds.

Largest Tuna, taken by Zane Grey. Weight 318 pounds.

THE END

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